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# HOW-2 Meet Women

The Shy Man's Guide to Relationships



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## The Shy Man's Guide To Relationships

by

**Cartaphilus**

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## The Shy Man's Guide to Relationships

by  
Cartaphilus

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## Preface

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As with all endeavors, you get back from **HOW-2 Meet Women** what you invest in it, in time, energy, . . . and money. If you treat this as just another throwaway "freebie", it will pass in and out of your life, with no discernible effect. The \$10 registration has a deep symbolic value, as a token of your dedication to personal growth and self-improvement.

And then there is the element of chance, or *lady luck* as some prefer to call it. Registering this book might well improve your luck with women. It will, at the very least, relieve you of the guilt of taking without giving back. Operating with a clear conscience, with purity of intent and clarity of purpose will serve you well in social situations.

**Luck = purpose + persistence + integrity.**

**This is not freeware.** The author relies on user contributions in order to keep working on this and other projects. If insufficient support is forthcoming, he will be forced to devote his efforts to earning a living by more conventional means, and have little or no time left for luxuries such as writing. Moreover, he will have learned a sad lesson about human nature.

As an added *bonus*, you, as a registered user have received, an enhanced PDF version of this book, with extra material added.

## Warning to Predators

***HOW-2 Meet Women* is for shy men trying to overcome their social handicaps. If you are a man with dishonorable intentions, and you are reading this book for pointers on seducing women, you will be severely disappointed. The text contains hidden landmines and traps cunningly designed to rip apart the brittle self-image and flimsy defenses of men lacking integrity. Predator, if you read this book, you will profoundly regret it.**

The author is interested in receiving comments and suggestions from registered users and other interested parties either at the above address or via [e-mail](#).

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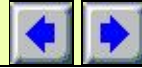
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**There are three things men can do with women:  
love them, suffer for them, or turn them into literature.**

**Stephen Stills**



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# HOW-2 Meet Women

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## Introduction

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### Beginnings

**This is for all you shy and lonely guys out there.** It's painful enough being alone, but seeing "everyone else" laughing and having a good time with wives and girlfriends, how easy it is to despair of ever gaining these pleasures, to resign myself to being tortured forever by loneliness, to slip into hopelessness. To give up.

No! I hold in my own hands the power to change my life. If only I could turn the same talent and experience that have brought me success in other pursuits to the challenge of finding, meeting, and creating a relationship with a love mate, what wonders might I yet accomplish? For so many desperate and empty years have I struggled to find a companion, something that seems to come naturally to so many other men, yet I have choked on ashes and bitterness. Nonetheless, it is **my very failures** that make me worthy of love. I will succeed, I will relate in a rare and meaningful way to a woman, and to a depth that will forever be denied those to whom love comes too easily and who therefore take it for granted. I have remained true to the romantic ideal and have escaped the fate of those cynical burnouts that I envy in moments of weakness. Unlike the professional Romeos, those manipulators and skillful predators who attract women effortlessly, I see a love relationship as the singularly precious thing it is. How very fortunate will be the woman who wins my heart.

**To fear love is to fear life, and those who fear life are already three parts dead.**

Bertrand Russell

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### First Steps

Hard work and pain lie ahead. This journey of self-discovery and transformation demands all the courage and determination you can muster. Grit your teeth, for there is much learning to be done, and many mountains loom in the distance. Fortunately you need climb only one at a time.

Each painful lesson will leave you, if bloodied, ever more determined to press onward. As hard steel is tempered by heating, then quenching in cold water, so too will your character be strengthened by the hardships you surmount. Growing hurts.

**If there is a purpose to life's cruelties and tragedies, it is to make of you a better person. It can be likened to stripping the faded and peeling paint from an antique piece of fine cabinetry to reveal the magnificence of the natural wood grain underneath. This lends credence to the assertion that the only truly strong and quality people are those**

that have been fire-hardened and polished by adversity.

You will practice **patience**. You will be patient with yourself. You will be patient with the people you relate with. You will trust that all will work out for the best, and not force matters along. Relationships progress at their own pace, and it is oftentimes a slow one.

**You will never, never give up.**

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## Learning From Experience

Life is about making mistakes and collecting bruises, learning from them, becoming transformed by them. There is something **universal** about making a fool of yourself, falling on your face, being rejected by a woman. It has happened to you. It may well happen again. It happens to everyone.

**Who will tell whether one happy moment of love, or the joy of breathing  
or walking on a bright morning and smelling the fresh air, is not worth  
all the suffering and effort which life implies?**

Erich Fromm

Admit your mistakes. There's no place to hide from them, but don't take them personally. They need not shatter your self-confidence. Be strong (the pain will recede). Stand back and analyze what happened. Take notes. Record your experiences, tell your story. **Keep a journal.** It will help you pull together the scattered fragments of your life and piece together the deeper meaning of it.



Recognize the dangers of *overcorrecting* for your aloneness, of prematurely throwing yourself into the "social whirl" to break out of your isolation. You need stability and continuity in your life, and be wary of disrupting familiar routine, lacking adequate preparation. Changing your life is a major undertaking, and it will take time.

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## Defining Yourself

Before proceeding farther, it is time to define your own individual identity, to get a firm grasp on *who* and *what* you are, to figure out what differentiates you from all the other humans running around in the wide world. This is hard work, and will require a considerable investment in time and effort . . . and thought.

**Exercise 1:** Compose a 1000-word or longer essay, titled ***Who I Am***. Tell all about yourself, your interests and your goals, your passions, your hidden desires, your joys and your hurts, your strengths and your weaknesses, your sources of pride and what you are ashamed of. (*Who is the real person inside, the one others fail to see?*) Essentially, you will be describing what you have to offer to the woman who will love you (for you can't come into a relationship empty-handed).

**Exercise 2:** Write a rather detailed autobiography. Recall as many as you can of the formative influences and people in your life. Remember your achievements and failures, your moments of triumph, and the depths of your pain and despair. Call it "*How I Got Here*."

**Exercise 3:** Write a short description of the woman you would like to meet, the one who haunts your dreams, the *soulmate* who will enter your life one day. Paint a "word picture" of her. What is she like? Is there anything particularly striking about her appearance? Describe her personality. What special appeal does she hold for you? *Why will she be attracted to you in particular?* Call this one "*My Woman*."

These three essays will form the introduction, the frontispiece and anchor to your journal, the tale of your *journey*. Should you lose your way, this is your *compass*, your guide back to the path you will follow. Here is your first gift to yourself, a sense of direction.

**We are all of us poets and storytellers, making literature of our lives . . .**

**Kelly Cherry**

## **V**

### **Realizations**

Having a girlfriend will not solve any problems - it will tend to worsen them, if anything. Bonding with a woman will add to the tension and pressure already on you. You need to fix up your life and your *Self* to be worthy of a meaningful relationship, to be able to uphold your end of it. Learn to be comfortable with yourself, to use your aloneness creatively, to transform *lonely* into *self-sufficient*.

**The less you need others, the more they will be attracted to you.**

Gain social skills. Communicate with people. Learn how to talk. Becoming at ease in conversation makes it easier to make friends and relate to them. Empathize with and help those around you. Partake of their joys and griefs, their accomplishments and failures. Grow, and share your own experiences with them.

Build on your existing social connections - family, friends, and colleagues at work. Even business relationships of the most impersonal sort help establish your place in the scheme of things and reinforce your inner sense of connectedness. You must break out of your isolation, emerge from your cocoon before you can even entertain the notion of a romantic relationship.

Become a "collector" of people. Enlarge your social circle. This means reaching out to strangers, saying hello to persons unknown, and in general, meeting people and acquiring casual friends and acquaintances. Making new contacts is sometimes difficult and always a little scary, but it pays off in the long run - you never know who will introduce you to your next girlfriend. This is called networking.

Recreate yourself as a more interesting person. Keep up with current events. Read books. Continue your education. Pursue hobbies and interests, cultivate skills. Become proficient in some endeavor, some field. Being looked up to as an expert will gain you respect and admiration. Help others and teach them.

Evolve and develop into a strong, independent individual. Become a helper, a resource. Give support and encouragement to those that need it. Be a pillar of strength to those weaker than you. Volunteer your services to groups that help others. Let the goodness in your heart shine as a beacon to those around you. Know that what you get from life is a return on what you give.

Lonely men seek companionship. Lonely women sit at home and wait. They never meet.

If some of the advice presented appears counterintuitive, it is because shyness bears its own imperatives, and this necessitates viewing "the rules of engagement" of the dating game from an unusual perspective, through the distorting lens of an outsider. You are already aware that you cannot compete with your more socially adept peers *on their own terms*, and it follows that extraordinary efforts are required . . . to even out the playing field and give you at least a fighting chance.

Every technique described from here forward is but a codification of what the socially adept do instinctively. So can you too master these modes of behavior by understanding and practicing them to the point where socializing becomes as natural as breathing.

I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas.  
I'm frightened of the old ones.

John Cage

The following chapters are not, in any sense, intended to be a "*paint-by-the-numbers*" kit (rigid adherence to any recipe is generally doomed to failure). Rather, think of them as an all-purpose toolkit, a sort of Swiss army knife, a rough navigation guide. Let these writings serve as an inspiration on your voyage of development and self-discovery, in your apprenticeship to become a fully realized human being. Even if these teachings do not bring you a girlfriend, and they may not, at the very least, you will emerge from this with a better understanding of social interactions and of... yourself.



"Come to the edge," he said.  
They said, "We are afraid."  
"Come to the edge," he said.  
They came, he pushed them...  
and they flew.

Guillaume Appolinaire



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## Chapter 1

### Healing

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They robbed you of your birthright. Family and peer group ripped from you at an early age the innocent social adeptness of the young. The bullying and being "cut down to size" that passes for *socialization* scarred your psyche. The fearful result is that you are not just shy, but *painfully* shy.

There is a place for shy, introspective persons. It is not a comfortable one. These are the creative ones, the ones who develop their minds, the ones who think while others act. They are the ones taken for granted, their worth unrecognized. They are the ones who cannot get dates...

"The consequences of shyness are deeply troubling. People for whom shyness is an ongoing problem don't take advantage of social situations, date less, are less expressive verbally and nonverbally, and show less interest in other people . . ."

*The Encyclopedia of Mental Health, Henderson and Zimbardo*

#### ii

Remember the time you could not think of anything to say to the woman sitting across from you in that little cafe. There was a painful lump in your throat, and you stammered when she looked your way. She smiled at you sympathetically, but still, there was no way to reach out to her, to touch her... and you lost yet another chance to make contact.

Remember *that* party, when you were standing off to one side by yourself, and the other people were stealing brief glances at you over their shoulder, laughing quietly, giggling, some of them. You approached several of the women, but quickly they found excuses to move away. Finally you walked out into the bitter cold night air, only then to realize that your fly was open.

Remember leaving that one dance, and ahead of you, walking home, was the woman you had danced with for hours. She met your eyes, momentarily, nearly smiled (you thought), but kept walking. You could not quite summon up the courage to approach her, to ask if you could at least accompany her to the nearest subway stop. She walked away into the night and out of your life.

. . . and all the various things that lock our wrists to the past.

Charles Wright

### iii

#### You Can't Get There From Here, Can You?

A gaping chasm splits off the landscape of the shy and lonely from the rest of humanity. This is the great divide between *losers* and *winners*, so we are told. What radical transformation, then, would it require to reshape a shy person into an extroverted, socially adept one? Where would you find the kind savior to rescue you from the prison of your loneliness and tutor you in the social skills needed to escape from the four walls of your own head? Where can you learn to care for, to love another?

Personality change is virtually impossible *under ordinary circumstances*. Likewise, saviors are in ridiculously short supply (and not so easy to recognize when they are found). What shapes your fate is your own perceptions, your old ingrained habits of fear and failure. Others sense how you feel about yourself and mirror your self-image back at you. Face yourself, *know thyself*, and take your life into *your own* hands. Become a stronger person and depend no more on fortuitous happenstance, on *wishing and hoping*.

We are all worms. But I do believe I am a glowworm.

Winston Churchill

Only the bridge of self-acceptance and understanding traverses the abyss isolating us from our fellow humans. We shy people must of necessity become our own rescuers, teachers and saviors. Yet, if the tools for self-transformation exist, they are difficult to use. Social skills can be learned, as a rule slowly and sometimes painfully, but loneliness is a powerful motivator.

...less than ten percent of communication comes from the words that are said. The majority of the message comes from nonverbal cues, like gestures, facial expressions and tone-of-voice. Individuals who do not understand or use nonverbal communication appropriately are at a disadvantage in social situations.

-- Marshall Duke

The useful social skills are but subtle elaborations of what we already know and do, yet of a somewhat higher order. Obvious examples include listening, picking up on nonverbal cues, and having a sense of the other individual's personal space. Then on to group interactions, such as speaking for an audience (including the not-so-lowly art of telling jokes). Finally, the *high arts* - being able to start a conversation with a total stranger, knowing when to wait and when to act (timing is everything), effectively being able to express yourself in person or in writing, and dancing.

## The Mythical Man Shortage

If there are too few men to go around, why then haven't hordes of partner-hungry women been camping on your doorstep? Maybe they don't know your address, but more likely it would seem to be a



matter of "quality", not quantity. Most women will not settle for just any man, but insist on one who meets their personal minimum standards, and those standards are all too often strongly influenced by pop culture ideals of physical appearance, masculinity, and success. Women mainly seek men who have proven themselves by amassing money, possessions, and... the admiration of other women. Shy, lonely men need not apply.

How, then, do you join the ranks of these "desirable" men?

- Competence in social situations.
- Experience.
- Fearlessness, or at least strong nerves.
- Confidence, gained through...  
self-knowledge, and a consistent track record of accomplishment.

#### iv

### Developing Self-confidence

. . . only the weak are sent on paths without perils.

Hermann Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game*

Self-confidence flows from the *courage* to make fundamental choices - choosing to accept risk, to confront failure, and to learn from it. It means testing yourself against adversity, and ultimately defining yourself by your resistance to despair, your defiance of defeat, your endurance in the face of suffering. It means surviving rejection, embarrassment, even total humiliation - finding meaning in them, and coming back stronger than ever. It means building a hard inner core of strength on the network of scar tissue left over from old injuries. It means getting up when you fall and bouncing back from defeat. It means accepting and respecting yourself *as you are*, with all your flaws and warts.

Self-confidence grows as you discover your strengths and learn to accept your weaknesses. It is not a quality that can be ripped out of the context of personal growth, that can be distilled to a simple formula, that can be indoctrinated by repetition of mantras, that can be applied as a veneer to cover up inner doubts and fears. It radiates from within, as a consequence of clarity of purpose and sheer force of will.

Unlike most people, those who sleepwalk their way through life, the ones to whom self-confidence was spoon-fed as part of the socialization process, you stand out as "weak" and unsure of yourself. Of course, those others are self-confident, they belong to a family, a group, a social circle that nurtures and reinforces their belief in themselves. But it is not rooted deeply within their own self, and there is no steel beneath the surface. Their character lacks the fire-hardening of adversity, and is all the more vulnerable and fragile for it. It requires only one sharp blow, one misfortune or lurch to disrupt their 'sense of place', their self-confidence, their fundamental identity.

## Desensitizing yourself to failure.

Recall, and record in minute detail the worst and most humbling failure you can remember. [Dedicate a special section of your journal to this painful task]. Construct a 'timeline' of the incident, and systematically dissect each of your actions and the resulting behavior of the others present. How does one follow from the other? What could you have done differently?

Finally, take pride that you had the resolve to continue living and relating to the persons who witnessed your humiliating pratfall. For all the things you did *wrong*, there were isolated moments of defiant resistance that ennobled and gave meaning to your abject misery.

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### Exercise #2

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## Feeling Good About Yourself

Choose one of the good memories from your past history, the success story you are most proud of. Freeze that scene, the expressions of the people looking on, the feel of your muscles tensing as you realized just what you were up against, your quick assessment of the situation and your decisive action. Now, consider what made this particular experience so empowering for you. Cherish the feelings you had at that singular moment of triumph, and carry an ember of that warm glow with you - always.

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### Exercise #3

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## Giving Meaning To Your Life

An insecure, purposeless life needs *structure*, meaningful pattern, a *plan*. While a job imposes a structure of sorts on the day, it leaves those long hours of leisure to be disposed of by entertainment and simple time-killing. Is it so surprising then, that insecure people seek approval and reassurance from others, that they lack a sense of personal identity, that they need desperately to fill the terrible void inside them?

What areas in your own life lack structure? Does your daily routine have a *purpose*, or are you just "running on autopilot"? What changes could you make to give your life more 'solidity', a greater sense of order?

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### Exercise #4

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## Helping

Help someone among your family, friends, or acquaintances with a self-confidence problem. Give them emotional support, and help validate them as a worthwhile human being.

## Summing Up

- Grow callouses over your tender spots. Learn to withstand emotional pain.
- Develop a sort of 'tough optimism', that you "can do", despite possible hardships and reverses.
- Don't wager all your self-esteem on a single pursuit, be it work, sports, or relationships. Diversify, develop multiple interests. Become a "Renaissance man", mastering some skills, practicing at others, being at least acquainted with most of the remainder of human experience.
- Figure out the rules and strategies in the relationship game, and become adept at playing.
- Respect your failures, and learn from them.

Becoming reconciled to your flaws and weaknesses gives a realistic perspective on life and strengthens you for the challenges ahead. You gradually come to the realization that you are a worthwhile person, that your struggles toughen and ennoble you, that your most painful failures build character. *Grow* and learn to take your place in the world.

**Of life the mingled wine and brine  
I sit and sip pipslipsily.**

Anonymous

(quoted in an essay of Doug Hofstadter)



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## Chapter 2

### What Attracts Women?

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i

Humans attract one other for the oddest reasons. Traits one woman finds irritating or even repellent in a man will strike another as cute and endearing. Affection colors perception. The woman who loves you will judge you with loving eyes.

Think of your long nose or jutting ears as barriers to keep the "wrong" women away. Your warts are your very own. Yours. Part of your persona. *Even if you were classically handsome, would you truly want women attracted only for that?* The traits that are intrinsic to you, that set you apart, that make you unique are what you will be loved for and treasured. Find a woman who will value you for what you are, and she will be worthy of your love.

Learn the lesson here - to look past "skin-deep" appearance. This enlarges the pool of eligible women and improves your odds of finding the one to love... a woman who has likewise learned this.

A man does not insist on physical beauty in a woman who builds up his self-esteem. After a while he realizes that she is beautiful.

He just hadn't noticed at first.

aphorism

ii

### What physical traits attract women?

- Muscles
- Slimness
- Hair - facial and chest
- Cleanliness (deodorant & breath spray?)
- Grooming (taking care of yourself)
- Clothes (complementing your physique)
- Carriage and walk (proud bearing)

- Classic facial features
- Weather-beaten appearance (scars?)
- Coloring (blonde, dark... depends)
- All of the above
- None of the above

*You might find it effective to cultivate a personal style, to become known by a "trademark". Custom-tailored clothes, boots, colorful accessories, a mustache or beard, and an unusual hairstyle can provide an outlet for your imagination in creating a distinctive "look" and emphasizing your best features. Originality wins extra points, so avoid the commonplace and the fashionable.*

**Wear an unusual pendant around your neck, perhaps an old coin hung on a chain, a heavy weathered brass or oxidized silver chain, not gold (garish and tasteless). You can find nice 1000-year-old Byzantine coins in the \$20 - \$50 range at a reputable coin dealer .**

*All this gives you an ego boost, gets women to notice you and possibly approach you to start a conversation. It will make a striking first impression. Note that attracting attention could have undesirable side effects. The technique is not without its perils, and may not be appropriate for everyone.*

Now we come to the critical question. Just how significant are your looks, when it comes to attracting women?

**Physical appearance means little.**

How then can we explain the recent phenomenon of women requiring good looks, the masculine equivalent of "beauty", in their partners? Regrettably, even otherwise intelligent women occasionally succumb to the propaganda and blandishments of *pop culture* and its noxious offshoots. They fall prey to the same fallacy that many men have cherished for so long, that people are little more than commodities, consumables, and that physical beauty must therefore be the primary consideration in the choice of a mate. This fraudulent premise turns such women away from the many fine men with whom they might otherwise find happiness and fulfillment. It is the sad spectacle of the moth drawn toward the flame, spiraling slowly downward toward her doom. The last thing any self-respecting man needs is to be hooked up with one of these tragically deluded creatures.

What counts is interior image, how you see yourself, and consequently, how you carry yourself. Inner strength, confidence, pride... all this radiates out into the world, and effects how others see you.

You are an *intelligent* person. Recognize this. Wisdom, gleaned from painful experience, builds the judgment to make reasoned decisions. Knowledge and competence set you apart. Talents and skills, carefully nurtured, win respect from your peers... yet you avoid the trap of arrogance. Calm and controlled, exercise *common sense*, that most noble of virtues. You have attained maturity.

You are an *honest* person. Your source of inner strength is rock-solid integrity, an iron-clad sense of honor. Practice restraint and do not abuse your authority over others. Have a kind, generous heart and help those less fortunate. Value morality, but show compassion toward the weaknesses of others, and understand your own.

You are a *shy* person. Yet does not your very shyness set you apart, give you your own particular charm, exalt you? Shyness is your center, your power, your shield and armor. Wear it proudly. Glory in it.

Life is funny, and sometimes bizarre. Laugh at it, and at your own self. People who take themselves too seriously are pompous, and make spectacles of themselves. A sense of humor keeps things in perspective, preserves your sanity, and perchance might even entertain your friends and associates.

Let yourself be a thoughtful and caring person. As an attentive listener, you inspire trust in others, and they freely express their feelings in your presence. Your sensitivity gives you insight into their needs. Express your own feelings in an honest but restrained manner, and do not hide your vulnerability. Give and accept compliments. Help. Give comfort. Be a friend as well as a lover.

. . . the reason I please and mean so much to you is that I mirror your inner self, and something in me responds to your very being.

Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

Acquire the skill of translating your inner dialog. Share yourself with others. Speak what you mean, no more and no less. Practice writing, be it a whimsical piece of fiction, or a love letter. Expression is the art of communicating to others your thoughts and feelings, it is a tool and a weapon, and is something of a lost art in the modern age.

Cultivate and learn to trust your *intuition*. Most people can sense "kindred spirits" even across a crowded room filled with strangers. You find a woman in harmony and in tune with your feelings and beliefs at the exact time that she finds *you*, almost as if by magic. It is indeed a magic of sorts, a poorly understood ability we all share, if it has not been irrevocably damaged by skepticism and ridicule. It is a "wild talent", an ability to feel out, sense, intuit, and *know* another person before even speaking a word to her. Note that this is separate and distinct from *character judgment*, an important learned skill that acts as a double-check and brake on intuition.

Confidence has at its foundation a sense of purpose. Calm, but singleminded, pursue your goals while respecting the needs and feelings of others. Firm, but not overbearing, inspire others to share your commitments. Fortright and plain spoken, radiate security.

Willingness to stand up for yourself and your beliefs gives the courage to *dare*, to take risks, though tempered with the wisdom to know when to step back from the brink. Be willing to speak your mind, but know when to hold your tongue. Overcome adversity, survive setbacks, learn from mistakes. Discipline and self-control give you the inner strength to endure. This is perceived as "*character*".

Be *responsible*. Keep your word. Always. Develop a reputation for consistency. Win trust by your reliability. Honor your commitments. Give loyalty when it is earned, and inspire it in others.

Stay open to new ideas. Be spontaneous, but reasoned. Accept challenges... judiciously. Smell the flowers. Appreciate a sunset.

Nurture the "little kid" in you, preserve the "boyishness" (women love this). Better to be a bit naive, than jaded and used up. Meet life's hardships head-on - don't let them grind you down, drown you in bitterness and cynicism, leave you broken and hollow.

Be a happy person, and show it. Communicate your joy in life. Have a smile ready for everyone (it can be a *shy* smile). Cherish mischief and laughter. Play.

Charisma and its common variants, "chemistry", animal magnetism, and just plain sexiness - those are the mysterious forces that haunt so much of human destiny. In truth, we are all blessed (or damned) with these qualities in various measure, yet in the normal course of events they remain hidden beneath the scars and hurts we wear, smothered by lack of self-confidence, obscured by the memory of past failures, masked by the roles our families and acquaintances force upon us. Learn to become your *true self*, to awaken to who you are and your role in life, to grow, to liberate the powers within - and discover that you, too, can develop the knack of attracting women.

#### A Mystery Explained

Why are so many women attracted to married men, obsessed by them? The married man has no need to "play games" or prove himself, thus he tends to be relaxed and confident in his dealings with the opposite sex. He wears the shining armor of his *experience* and exudes an aura of "forbidden fruit". His married state convincingly demonstrates that at least one woman finds him attractive, and this very fact makes him even more desirable in the eyes of many other women - it confirms their judgment that he is worth pursuing. He is *unavailable*, and his very inaccessibility makes him highly desirable. Truly a deadly combination.

What can the single guy learn from all this? *Act married*. You need not "play games" or prove yourself, and thus be relaxed and confident in your dealings with the opposite sex. Do not make yourself too accessible to the opposite sex; let women invest at least a little bit of effort to get near you. Above all, avoid the behavior patterns of being "*on the prowl*", radiating **neediness and desperation**. Panting after women, with your tongue literally hanging out, you play the fool. Staying detached, just a bit distant, cool - calm - collected, you project confidence and strength. Wear the shining armor of your very own experience and exude an aura of "forbidden fruit", of being the proud, sensitive, strong, and yes, *desirable* shy man.

Overcome your own appearance prejudices, stop rejecting possible partners because you judge them too fat, too old, too unattractive... Tolerance and compassion toward the "failings" of the woman you seek will help you find the one who will accept your own imperfections. Mutual acceptance is the key.

### Afterthought

Some years back, a personal ad in New York's *Village Voice* specified " . . . no walking wounded."

Absurd! It is virtually impossible to survive childhood without wounds. Many of us are "walking wounded," but the rest are too badly maimed even to walk. Which category described the woman who placed the ad?

**When women love us, they forgive us everything, even our crimes;  
when they do not love us, they give us credit for nothing, not even our virtues.**

Honoré de Balzac



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Cartaphilus

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## Chapter 3

### Challenging the Conventional Wisdom

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#### Expanding Your Horizons

*Popular culture* depicts a sleek, long legged, big-breasted nubile blonde as the ideal love partner... just the type of fantasy woman who would turn up her nose at a shy man, and why not, as she could choose from any number of ruggedly handsome socially adept men... These are the beautiful people, a world unto themselves, unapproachable, narcissistic, smug, and far removed from reality. Shy men are well advised to stay clear of this particular crowd.

Consider instead women outside the mainstream. Fellow social outcasts, these are *real people*, human beings who have had to grapple with life's hardships, to endure pain, to choke on embarrassment, to feel the lash of rejection... just as you have. Struggling with problems, rebounding from failure, learning by necessity to fight - all this develops the personality, forces one to grow, to become fully human, to become capable of loving and worthy of being loved.

**Sweets are first tasted by the eye, but flavour is the heart and soul of all confectionery.**

John Millar

"Ugly" women glow with a serene inner beauty. Their faces are a study in rococo sculpture, an unfamiliar language of landscape and form, an intricate and convoluted roadmap of life itself. Their bodies hold promise of hidden delights. Their spirits reach out in too-long denied explosive passion. **These are uncut gems, their charm not yet set aglow by a lover, their eyes glinting with hidden meanings, their depths undiscovered.**

Fat women are round and cuddly. Lush and sensuous, warm and accepting, they radiate love. Their endless flowing curves, impossible to encompass save by caress, express the very essence of femaleness. Soft and yielding, ever so much more squeezable than their sharp-edged bony sisters, they submerge you in their embrace, their embrace, oh, so sweet, the Primeval Ocean, the source of life.

Older women make better lovers, as celebrated in song and folklore. Their life skills uplift shy youthful lovers past barriers of fear and inexperience. Unexcelled as nurturers and teachers, they bestow patience and understanding. They care.

Single mothers make wonderful companions. Children are the great equalizer in the dating game, and classy women who might otherwise not even give you a second glance find you attractive if you are not put off by their children. These are mature women, experienced in the ways of life, insightful, less likely to judge you by

superficial appearance and dismiss you because you do not fit the mold of a sociable fun-loving guy. This is an opportunity... and a grave responsibility. If you accept the woman, you must likewise accept her children, as they must accept you.

Handicapped women overflow with boundless love. Forging vast inner resources to cope with physical infirmity, they infuse strength annealed with compassion into a relationship. Having suffered, but not shattered, flamed but not burned, cried but not despaired, they bear hope and healing to the fortunate men who find them.

Women of different races and cultures blend an aura of the exotic with a tinge of the forbidden. Diversity adds color to a relationship, and a touch of the strange lends spice and excitement to the flowering of intimacy.

**Rising within women's eyes  
Is the love men must return.  
Louise Bogan**

You may *want* a conventionally beautiful woman hanging on your arm, one you could proudly show off to friends and family as a mark of personal achievement, a trophy, a status symbol. What you *need* is closeness and honesty in an intense, emotionally supportive relationship. Look for a *real* woman, a woman who, like yourself, has experienced pain and rejection because she does not conform to society's standards of appearance. Look for a woman whose beauty is more than skin-deep.

**She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies.  
Lord Byron**

## **ii Redefining Roles**

Creative self-defense against the *system* requires stepping outside it. As a shy person, you already have the advantage of being an outsider. The perceptual prison of traditionalism need not bind and limit you, rather, it can be used to your advantage.

You, the shy person, have been assigned a role, a mask to wear, by your social group. Left in the background, pushed aside by your more aggressive peers in competition for mates, treated as a "younger brother" by eligible women, you cannot help seeing yourself as victim. Stop. Take a hand in the writing of the story, not just in the acting.

Graciously accept the role of a safe, non-threatening friend. Be the confidante, the shoulder to cry on, the sympathetic listener. Observe, listen, and learn. Stay aloof from the role playing, the manipulative mating behavior of the other inmates of the asylum. When your time comes, and it will, you'll have grown into the persona of the *wise man*, the healer, the "elder statesman", the giver of love. And to the giver shall be given.

Behold the answer to the age-old question, *how can I make her love me?*

**You cannot.**

She will love you, or she will not.  
If she loves you, rejoice.  
If she loves you not, find another.

iii

**All You Really Need To Know About Women**

Under a hard shell of indifference and standoffishness, beneath all those protests of self-sufficiency, there burns a desperate loneliness, a deep hunger for companionship, for someone to talk with, to share the small delights of everyday life with, for understanding, and yes, for a little tenderness and a caring touch. This is the ultimate source of every woman's vulnerability, so often exploited by predators, and it cries out for compassion . . . and loving.

Reason has moons, but moons not hers  
Lie mirrored in the sea,  
Confounding her astronomers  
But, oh, delighting me.

Ralph Hodgson

iv

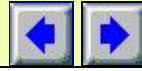
**Special Handling Required**

What an enigma is woman. Seldom understood, often abused and reviled, regarded with a mixture of awe and fear, she is dismissed as a distraction from important affairs, yet still revered as the ultimate Mystery. Traditionally forced into the role of the scapegoat, treated with contempt or outright brutality, intimidated, exploited and used, she has suffered much at the hands of her men. Forgotten is that woman has been the keeper of the racial wisdom, the crucible of culture, the preserver of civilization, the nurturer of life, the center of family and clan, the source of creation.

Treat women kindly, and be rewarded. Leave control and mind games to the users and manipulators. You have grown past that. Cherish and respect all women, for is not every woman at the core the image of your mother, your daughter, your lover?

**Without love, intelligence is dangerous  
Without intelligence, love is not enough.**

**Ashley Montagu**



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## Chapter 4

### The Art of Conversation

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**Words are the voice of the heart.**

By far the most terrifying barrier to developing relationships with women is learning to talk with them. Approaching an attractive stranger across the gulf of flickering candlelight at a party, or two tables distant at a coffee house looms as formidably as scaling a sheer icy spire. Making the *first contact* is as fearful as being born, yet as wondrous as emerging from a cave and seeing bright sunlight for the first time.

Even thinking of approaching her makes you break out in a cold sweat. Muster up your courage, get up from your chair, and propel yourself forward. Smile warmly, or shyly if you prefer, as you draw near. **If the woman desires your presence, she will make eye contact and return your smile.** \* You will feel her warmth, though you have yet to touch. Awareness of and sensitivity to subtle visual cues, discreet signals and *body language* provide the clues that your attentions are welcome (if they are *not*, proceed no further). Rely on your judgment and perceptions, as well as your intuition, to guide you in this crucial step. It becomes easier with practice, as you gain experience and confidence, and learn to read people.

\* If the woman *avoids* eye contact, then it's probably a lost cause. Try again with someone else.

**Everyone risks being laughed at when he approaches a woman. That is always at stake.  
Take a chance . . . and if worse comes to worse, let yourself be laughed at.**

Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

As a shy man, you lack the absolute, steely-eyed confidence that it takes to cold-bloodedly approach a stranger, and without preliminaries take complete possession of her attention, then whisper sweet intimacies into her ear, and lead her off into the sunset. It happens in the movies, and a select few men have the talent (and it doesn't even work for them all that often). You, though, at this early stage of your development, must fall back on more traditional methods of breaking through the barrier. Easy does it.

Act naturally. Using a "line" comes across as phony, nor is it a particularly effective tactic for shy people in any case. So what to do for an opening gambit?

- "You have such beautiful blue eyes..."
- "You seemed so lonely, standing there by yourself..."

- "Those are very unusual earrings..."
- "What do you think of the weather lately..."
- "What's a nice woman like you doing in a place like..."
- "How about them Redskins..."
- "These snacks taste a little stale, don't you think..."

All of the above chestnuts have been in use since "ancient times," and should be honorably retired.

A more straightforward conversation opener consists of simply introducing yourself. No tricks, fancy footwork, or flimflam necessary. Look the lady in the eyes, smile, and plunge right in.

- "Hello, I'm John Smith."  
...a classic move - simple, but devastatingly effective.
- "I'm Richard Jones. May I have the pleasure of your company?"  
...taking care not to sound *too* stiffly formal.
- "I'm delighted to make your acquaintance. Might I have the honor of introducing myself?"  
...bowing, heel clicking, hand kissing optional.
- "Do forgive me. I'm not very good at this sort of thing. Please allow me to present myself."  
...quite Continental.
- "They call me Bill Green, but my name is really William Green."  
...double take.

- "*We* are not like the others".  
(There's something *different* about you, and I *understand*.)

... and sally forth from there.

---

Get past the initial awkwardness in the conversation with smiles, jokes, "small talk", banter, inane observations, or whatever else works at the time. With practice, you will loosen up and become more spontaneous, and the talk will flow from you without effort. This, too, is an acquired skill.

**Imagine Gertrude Mollycoddle -- the friendly, grey-haired checkout lady at the supermarket -- standing opposite you, asking after your health because you look malnourished to her. Visualize her in all her glory, slightly disheveled, bedecked in a stained work apron, fussing over you in her own motherly sort of way. Now, whenever you are tongue-tied, shift into your *speaking-with-Mrs.-Mollycoddle mode*, and that will take the pressure off you and loosen a veritable flood of words and feelings.**

Remember her **name**. She spoke it when you introduced yourselves. In the excitement of talking to her, of sharing feelings, of comparing life experiences, it is all too easy to forget, to forget her name. Remember it. Use it. Address her by name. "Melissa, a name that flows like honey from the tongue." Indeed. People are in love with their own names, and, oftentimes, it is the key to their heart.

*Discreet* compliments help lubricate the flow of conversation. Express admiration for her physical and mental attributes, but don't overdo it. "That necklace compliments your hair very nicely", spoken in an offhand manner will likely have more favorable repercussions than "Your eyes are like bottomless pools of obsidian in a shadowed jungle glade". Most women like to hear that they look good, but they can usually detect clumsy attempts at insincere flattery.

A conversational gaffe to avoid at all costs is asking, without preamble, "What do you do?"

There seems to be an epidemic of this sort of rudeness in certain metropolitan areas, most notably New York City and environs. Besides labeling you as a fool, this tactless question is pushy and intrusive. Nearly as gauche is to ask her, "What are you thinking?", as she may likewise perceive this as an invasion of privacy. Remember, *subtlety* and *sensitivity* are critical at this stage.

**It is all right to hold a conversation, but you should let go of it now and then.**

**Richard Armour**

With the conversation underway, relax and enjoy yourself. Let the woman talk about herself... ask encouraging, but not intrusive questions. Let her charm you. Show respect and interest. Listen attentively and be responsive. Give her your full attention. **Be totally there for her.** Try to participate without monopolizing the conversation, and speak of things other than yourself. You need not force the pace, let it flow. Feel under no pressure to "accomplish" anything, and likewise refrain from pressuring the fair lady. Nurture the conversation and cultivate the person.

**Things to keep in mind:**

- Her comfort level
- Respecting her personal space, i.e., staying "out of her face"
- The verbal and non-verbal cues she is sending you

What you talk about\* does not matter as much as how you go about it. Engage her in the *realm of feelings*. Talk about your feelings. Ask her about her own. Women (mostly) have been socialized to respond more readily to feelings and emotion than to reasoning and logic. Women *feel*, and talking to them about feelings is the most direct way to get past their defenses and touch them.

\* If you need help here, refer to the [list of conversation topics](#) in the following chapter.

**A gossip is one who talks to you about others, a bore is one who talks to you about himself;  
and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself.**

**Lisa Kirk**

Then there comes that dreaded moment when the talk stops, when neither of you has anything further to say. Dead silence. Embarrassment, nervousness, a tight knot in the pit of your stomach. Unluckily, there exists no magic formula for restoring the flow of words. Should you be extremely uncomfortable in the lady's presence, consider at this point excusing yourself, "Matilda, I am at a loss for words just now, but it has been wonderful speaking with you. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me." ...If instead, you enjoy her company, you might say, "Silences are valuable, too. Would you mind if we just sit?" Then, stay at her side and be amused by the antics of those other hairless apes at the party, or watch the sun sinking below the horizon in crimson splendor, or feel the cooling afternoon breeze whipping past your face. One or the other of you might get up and leave in good time, and that is perfectly all right, for you may meet again, or not, as fate decrees. Accept the parting of your ways with dignity and grace. There will be other times.

And yet, there are those magic moments when everything **clicks** and you both know you would like to become better acquainted. As it comes time to say adieu for the evening, the lady will subtly or not so subtly hint that she might like to see you again. Depending on the situation, you might ask for her telephone number, or if that seems too forward, give her your card (you carry professionally printed business cards in anticipation of just such situations). A kiss on the cheek or a hug would certainly be a nice ending to the occasion, but should you be in the least bit unsure that this is what the lady desires, *ask* (do **not** under any circumstances force unwanted attentions on her). Kissing the lady's hand is considered somewhat old fashioned, but romantic and very "European", to be sure. A gentle squeeze of the hand works, too.

The outcome of a simple conversation with a woman can thus range from the pleasure of her company for a few brief moments, to a *de facto* "date", to the beginning of a deep involvement. With that in mind, treat every lady you encounter with the utmost respect, even with reverence. You may be speaking with your future beloved.

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

Oriah Mountain Dreamer, *The Invitation*



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# HOW-2 Meet Women

by

**Cartaphilus**

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## Chapter 5

### Telephone Fundamentals

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So, you have finally worked up the courage to call the woman you met last night. Why then does your hand tremble when you reach for the phone? Don't clutch that handset any tighter, or it just might shatter. Does the icy grip of the sweat running down your brow weaken your resolve just a bit? Rejoice, my good fellow, this can be a uplifting experience, a fearful delight, an opportunity to begin a exalted relationship, a chance to make a fool of yourself. If, indeed, heaven and hell can coexist in the exact same moment, and they can, it is right here, right now.

There is a rhythm and flow to a good telephone conversation, a rhythm and flow. As in any contact between people, a connection must be made, a rapport established. That terribly difficult first step. It is akin to climbing a perpendicular rock wall, to catching the rising tide and taming the howling winds, to walking barefoot over broken glass. Once the initial resistance, the first shock of pain is overcome, everything goes easier. It flows. Plunge in, immerse yourself and set free your voice, let it express your feelings, let it sing for you, let the telephone wires carry your message, and at some point (perhaps) things will "click". This is the resonance point, the place where everything fits together and destiny is made. The channel will be open, and the words will come, they will come of their own accord, and flow, smoothly they will flow, as though fate itself had written them in fire.

ii

Practice the simple techniques that strip a *first call* of most of its terrors. Take a blank notebook (this will become your "phone project" book) and begin outlining how you want the conversation to go. What would you talk about? What do you know about the woman -- her life story, her personality, her likes and dislikes, her beliefs and passions? What do you feel comfortable revealing about your own self? What is most important for her to know about you? What can you say that will purposefully lead to finding things you have in common, interests you share, activities you could do together . . .

Hopefully, you will have by now filled up the first several pages of the project book. At this point, transfer the information to a format that will better suit your purpose. Consider making a wall chart, a more or less elaborate diagram on poster board that will prompt you, guide and direct your conversation, when required.

This will function as a sort of "talisman", or lucky charm, to boost your confidence as needed.

Another item in your "tool box" is a set of index cards, that can likewise serve as a reminder and memory aid. This will remedy the "I should have said that" and "if I had only thought of..." syndrome. The cards can be used to take notes while you talk, and, at the very least, they will occupy your your hands and keep you from biting your nails.

Maintain a scrapbook of interesting facts, meticulously gathered and culled out from the newspapers and publications you read. This can help spark the conversation. During those dreadful moments of awkward silence, when neither of you can think of anything to say, you can discreetly leaf through the scrapbook and -- Aha! "Did you know that...?"

Finally, you might want to try a "dry run", or rehearsal. Enlist a sympathetic family member or a good friend who will not laugh at you, and have this person play the part of the woman you will be speaking to. Practice your varying "opening lines" and responses, and ask for feedback. A little gentle criticism can do wonders for your phone technique. If, on the other hand, there is no one with which you wish to share your little project, you can always do this by yourself, tape recording the session if you like. Repeat the procedure until you are confident you can handle "the real thing".

### iii

Make yourself comfortable. Put on some of your favorite music in the background. Soft music, relaxing music with a romantic undertone, if you prefer. Dim the lights (but not so low that you are unable to read your project book, wall chart, or index cards). Have a glass of water within reach. Take a deep breath and punch those numbers.

"Hello, I'm John Smith. No, I'm not peddling insurance, just my own sweet self. This is the fellow who asked you for your phone number last night at the art gallery. Yes, the one whose "yard sale chic" look you so admired (the sports jacket and tie Aunt Millie gave me for my 14th birthday were still at the dry cleaner's). Hello. Hello."

Time to let her talk. Keep enough presence of mind to make the appropriate noises and grunts at the right times to let her know you're still there. Laugh at her funnies. Encourage her. Administer verbal strokes and smiles, as necessary.

Speak in your natural voice... you need not strain. Take care not to dwell overly much on yourself. I, I, I, I... talking about I and me constantly is boring, boring. Ask her about herself, question her *gently*. Let her talk. Listen. Listen. Let her feel she's being listened to. Respond. Pepper the conversation with humor, genuine good humor. Humor is the saving grace of human discourse.

There is an abundance, a veritable universe to talk about, to share.

- Tell her about the time you almost skidded off the overpass because you were trying to juggle a soft drink and a baloney sandwich in the same hand.
- Share your most embarrassing moments growing up.
- Ask her what was the most adventurous thing she had ever done.
- Ask her who some of her heroes are.
- If her life were a movie, what actress would play the leading role?
- If her life were a novel, who would write it? What would be the plot?
- Explain why the sky gets dark at night ([Olber's Paradox](#)).

- Discuss the implications of Chomsky's theory of language acquisition.
- Talk about an accomplishment that made you feel good about yourself.
- Talk about the sense of satisfaction that comes from helping people.
- Consider whether cats make better pets than dogs, or vice versa.
- Ask her what was the most unusual food she had ever eaten.
- Give her your favorite exotic [scrambled egg recipe](#).
- Play her an aria from your favorite opera (or better yet, sing it for her).

Avoid like the plague politics, religion, and conspiracy theories. There will be plenty of time to argue about these later in the relationship. Iffy topics include demonic possession and the occult, UFO's, and the weather. Subject that tend to arouse strong negative feelings or conversely, that evoke no feelings at all, are best left alone.

When the conversation begins to wind down, when you both run out of things to say - it's time to sign off. Tell her how much you enjoyed speaking with her, that her company, even at a distance, has enlivened your evening. Ask her, gently, if she would care to repeat the experience (assuming it has not been too painful for either of you). Hang the phone up and have a tall, cold orange juice to celebrate.

And what if *she calls you*? This catches you completely off guard, and you're totally unprepared, just barely able to mumble something unintelligible to her cheery "Hiya, Norbert, how the heck are you?"

Take a moment to catch your breath. "Roxanne! Good to hear from you. I've been trying to work up the courage to call you, but you beat me to it. What a wonderful surprise." (You've practiced several all-purpose replies for those unexpected occasions.)

After the standard greeting ritual, things can roll along pretty much as laid out above. Since she initiated the call, there is a little more pressure on her to make conversation, and a little less on you. Relax, and bask in the glow of her attention.



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by

Cartaphilus

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## Chapter 6

*In the Arms of my Beloved*  
Writing Love Letters

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### i

*There you stand helpless, while the woman of your dreams glides across the far side of the room, too far away to touch, unattainable...*

There come times when it is difficult or unwise to directly approach the woman you wish to meet. Then there are the situations when the question arises of how to nurture a budding relationship, how to build on that casual encounter at the party last night, how to show your continuing interest to the woman who invited you to lunch last week. Here the power of the written word comes into play, when intimations of feeling and yearning are best expressed in the written mode, by letter, note, or even e-mail.

Consider the three phases of a relationship. The *acquaintanceship* period is characterized at first by distance, then by mutual courtesy and respect. This ripens into *friendship*, where warmth and trust unfold. Should the bond reach the point of *intimacy*, declarations of passion and commitment are in order. Letter writing can substitute for or enhance actual physical presence at any or all these intervals, and is especially well suited for the delicate early stages of a developing pair bond.

### ii

Ms. Jones,

You were extremely helpful to me yesterday in resolving the discrepancy in my account balance. I could not help admiring your professionalism and problem-solving skills. Such a combination of talent and common sense certainly makes you a person to be reckoned with. You are a credit to your organization.

Please permit me to express my gratitude for your help by treating you to dinner at the Brown Derby. This is the least I can do to repay your efforts above and beyond the call of duty on my behalf.

Yours sincerely,

John "Johnny" Smith

A written note to someone you have met only briefly requires a delicate touch - indeed subtlety and finesse of the highest order are prescribed. This permits either party to back off without loss of face (the second paragraph above may optionally be omitted to render the note even more deliberately innocuous). Be aware that a note under these circumstances involves considerable risk of rejection, and will likely be effective only when the woman addressed is actively seeking a new relationship.

Ginny,

Does a fleeting "hello" at a party qualify as an introduction? Wasn't that a twinkle in your eye when I proposed a toast to "The Year of the Penguin"?

How extraordinarily warm it was for a New Year's eve, and being able to look at the stars on the patio uncoated was as sweet as a stolen kiss. If you could but have joined me there, but ah, we had already parted and gone our separate ways.

The pebble tossed in the lake has sunk to the bottom, yet the rippling waters still bear within them the sum of all possibilities...

Feel under no obligation to reply - you may consider me a fool carried away by the spirit of the season, or just a fool, as you like.

The dark-haired stranger, the enigma, known to his friends as

Raphael

The getting acquainted phase is the time to be creative, perhaps to take some risks. After all, you do not have a relationship to lose . . . yet. Making a fool of yourself in the eyes of a stranger is just one more of life's little adventures.

Note very carefully that some women will react unfavorably to having advances made to them by a virtual stranger, and even a very subtle note may offend them. In such cases, *cease and desist* immediately, with apologies as appropriate.

### iii

You are good friends with her, but there is nothing romantic between you... Treasure the friendship! Nurture it. In the larger scheme of things, loyal friends are as rare as lovers (ex-lovers make the best friends, it is said, as truly as ex-friends make the best lovers). In any case, accept the friendship for what it is, enjoy it, and do not let impatience push you into presuming too much or jeopardizing the trust between the two of you.

Melinda,

What a joy it was popping into the art gallery at lunch today. We were a bit hurried/harried, and I'm still recovering from the assault on my senses by all those violent colors. The Pointillists are just a bit much, I think, on a Tuesday afternoon, and that hastily wolfed down sandwich cum bowl of soup did me no good at all.

Lord, what a pleasure it is to ricochet ideas off your wonderful mind! We have something precious here, a tight rapport, a spiritual communion, a sense of oneness rare even in a long-married couple. And to think that we're "just friends". Friends. What an exalted state must friendship be if it brings kindred souls into harmonic vibration.

Your friend, just, but not only,

Roland

Just friendship... or will it ever evolve into something more intimate? Let your words soar lyrically, warm yourself in the reflected light of mutual understanding, and appreciate the riches you have in being "just friends". Let the bond between you deepen, or not, as the weeks and months pass. Be patient, ever patient.

#### iv

Oh lucky man! You and your lady friend have finally spoken your devotion to each other, and have yes, touched.

**And the sunlight clasps the earth  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:  
What is all this sweet work worth  
If thou kiss not me?**

**Shelley**

Now indeed is the time for poetry, and your notes to your sweetheart will mirror and affirm your embraces. Let the words, rapturous words flow from the heart as the bond between you deepens.

**Drink to me only with thine eyes,  
And I will pledge with mine  
Ben Jonson**

#### v

Many are the needs served by a letter expressing profound feelings. Words on paper can kindle a relationship, deepen it, reconcile quarrels, and even... put an end to it.

## Four Keys to Effective Writing

- **Organize your thoughts. Be clear.**  
Use an outline or template, as needed.
- **Learn from the writings of others.**
- **Master grammar and spelling skills.**
- ***Rhythm* and *imagery* give writing impact.**

Study the art of the romantic epistle, Sir Knight, in search of the Holy Grail of Love. For all your shyness in her presence, you may nevertheless win the heart of your Fair Domina and touch her very soul in the exalted realm of the *written word*.

**I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes,  
and moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's.**  
Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*



Table of Contents

# HOW-2 Meet Women

by

Cartaphilus

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## Chapter 7

### Nothing Personal

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i

Perspective

Men wanted. Hard work.  
Low pay. Danger. High  
adventure. Chance of  
fame and glory.

The Arctic explorer who placed this newspaper ad to recruit participants for his expedition might well have been shocked at the magnitude of the response. Hundreds applied. The language is simple, direct... and compelling. This is marketing at its finest, the art of evoking human hopes and dreams.

Writing a *personal ad* is something of an adventure in itself. Here is an opportunity to reassess yourself, to focus and clarify your self-image, the chance to reinvent (or, at least, rewrite) yourself. You can sculpt the profile you display to the outside world, to the women you wish to meet. This assumes your total involvement in the project. It requires complete dedication to the task and responsibility for the consequences. What you are starting here may have far-reaching effects.

### What Personal Ads Can Do (Perhaps)

- ◆ Reenergize your social life, temporarily.
- ◆ Give fleeting glimpses of what it means not to be alone.
- ◆ Give you the chance to meet the woman of your dreams.
- ◆ Enable you to meet women outside your circle of acquaintances.
- ◆ Give you practice meeting strangers.
- ◆ Provide a *learning experience*.
- ◆ Give you the impetus to change your life.

### What Personal Ads Cannot Do

- ◆ Reenergize your social life, permanently.
- ◆ Cure loneliness.



- ◆ Guarantee you will meet the woman of your dreams.
- ◆ Guarantee girlfriends.
- ◆ Make you at ease meeting strangers.
- ◆ Transform shyness into social adeptness.
- ◆ Change your life.

## What Personal Ads Are

- ◆ An option.
- ◆ A tool.
- ◆ A stepping stone along the way.

## What Personal Ads Are Not

- ◆ "The Answer."

Personal ads have a long and venerable, even stodgy tradition. At one time, professional matchmakers and marriage brokers regularly placed ads and announcements for their clients in ethnic and foreign language newspapers. The personals fell into disrepute around midcentury, as a more modern, urbanized generation no longer felt the need to resort to indirect methods of meeting, dating, and mating. Since the 1980s, personal ads have made a comeback, regaining respectability by virtue of their ability to connect people who might otherwise never meet.

## ii Writing

Writing an effective ad requires imagination, sensitivity, and humor. Intermediate level or better communications skills, while not absolutely mandatory, considerably improve your chances for success. Treat this as a creative writing project, lavishing on it the same care you would on a grant proposal or a submission to a professional journal. This means extensive editing and revisions, not to mention having a working knowledge of the precepts of good writing (Strunk and White's classic, *The Elements of Style*, provides an excellent starting point). Note that if you cannot express yourself effectively in writing, now would be a good time to begin your education in this vital survival skill. A poorly written personal ad (or a lame imitation of someone else's) is an exercise in futility.

Given a very limited number of words in which to state your case, perhaps fifty or less, make each one count. Poetry compresses language almost to the bursting point. Imagery and metaphor are wicked, sharp-edged blades. Rhythm compels. Humor and irony are armor-piercing projectiles. A feeling for subtlety and nuance lends elegance to the naked word. Language - in its grandeur, its majesty, its masked violence - plumbs the mysteries of existence, unleashes avalanches of change and has the power to transform all it touches.

A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon lover!  
Coleridge, *Kubla Khan*

Shy guy in need of  
girlfriend. Lonely.  
Desperate. Life is empty.  
Save me from drowning in  
misery. From the depths,  
I cry out!

Oddly enough, this is hardly the worst of possible ads. Stark, almost gothic in its intensity, in its ostentatious display of pain, its pale echoes of Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*... it evokes pity, possibly even a nobler emotion or two. This could strike a chord with a woman looking for someone to "save", to rescue and nurture. More realistically, it will either elicit no responses at all, or, worse yet, get an answer from a woman looking for someone to "remodel." On a scale of 1 to 100, this gets a 5.

SWM, NS, ND, tall and  
handsome, muscular,  
financially secure. Enjoy  
long walks on the beach,  
moonlit nights, and  
cuddling in front of the  
fireplace at midwinter.

The generic "white bread" ad: uninspired, bloodless, and poorly written. It is about as palatable as a heaping bowl of cold oatmeal. The less said about it, the better. On a scale of 1 to 100, this one barely rates a 2.

Avoid the use of jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations unless you can make up clever ones of your own. "Boilerplate" constructions, while saving on word count, break the narrative flow, dilute the flavor of the message, and, in general, make their own unique contribution toward insipid prose. More to the point, they evoke snorts of derision, rather than responses. "*ND NS SWM seeks SWF*" (yawn), "*financially secure*" (yeah, sure), "*long walks in the moonlight*" (groan).

Home-cooked meals. Beach  
walks. Toasting  
marshmallows over a  
campfire. Tracing Orion's  
belt on a moonless night.  
Sitting on the back porch  
listening to NPR. Sharing  
a banana split on a July  
afternoon. Simple  
pleasures.

Somewhat of an improvement, even if it does read like a magazine ad. Not much originality here. It's all filler, but no real content.

**Axiom #0: Grab the readers' attention.**

Stray puppy in need of a  
good home. Cuddly,

floppy-eared 35-year old  
inventor would like to  
reinvent YOUR life...

**Axiom #1: Target the writing to the audience you wish to reach.**

Cassiopeia, starry-eyed  
maiden of my dreams,  
book lover, gourmet,  
esthete, athlete.  
Contemplate an afternoon  
at the atelier feasting  
our eyes on the  
Renaissance masters.  
Then home, home for more  
substantial fare.

**Reaching out to marginalized and "socially outcast" groups draws more responses.**

Wisdom and maturity  
signify more than  
societal standards of  
beauty. Statuesque fat  
woman, you burn with an  
inner passion. Share, oh  
share your warmth with  
me.

A man and a woman  
Are one.  
A man and a woman and a blackbird  
Are one.  
Wallace Stevens  
*Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*

**Axiom #2: Paint a picture of who you are, what you are about.**

Let your true, honest self shine through. Give the reader substance, rather than flash. Descriptive personal details are fine, up to a point, but don't overdo it. Leave something to the imagination, just a bit of mystery . . . let the woman anticipate what you are *really* like. Above all, avoid jargon and euphemisms.

Biker daddy, Herman  
Munster lookalike,  
popcorn addict, soap

opera aficionado,  
seeking a ray of  
sunlight. Set me on  
fire, baby.

Potbellied Polish  
polymath polygrapher,  
pundit, punster.  
Poleaxed by polka-dotted  
polyester Polynesian  
Pollyanna. Reply  
posthaste. Polly want a  
cracker?

No, no! Desire both lives and dies  
A thousand times a day.

Edmund de Vere

**Axiom #3: Honesty and integrity. There is only one real you.**

**Axiom #4: Humor.** If life is funny, then all the more so this whole silly business of finding a lover. A little laughter will enliven your ad, and your life.

**Axiom #5: Patience.** Things must proceed at their own pace. Or they will not.

**Axiom #6: Courage.** If your ad gets just a few or no responses at all, don't despair. Try again.

**Axiom #7: Empathy.** Put yourself in the woman's place.

Try to imagine [why women respond to a personal ad](#).

**Corollary:** Be kind to the women answering your ad. Try to treat each response compassionately, even if the woman is not quite right for you. Remember, you could be on the receiving end next time.

**Axiom #8:** Read other people's ads, to get ideas and to learn from their mistakes. It's so much less painful than learning from your own.

**Axiom #9:** Check your spelling (or use a spell checker). An ad containing spelling or grammar errors makes you look like an idiot.

**Axiom #10:** Run the prospective ad past a friend, preferably a woman friend, to confirm that it is not complete gibberish. Listen to advice, but trust your own judgment.

**Axiom #11 (the Eleventh Commandment):** Do not rely on axioms. Not even this one.

**Putting it all together, construct your ad using this template:**

- attention-grabbing intro [optional, but important]
- short description of you

- short description of her
- closing [optional]

Consider the following sample ad, put together according to these guidelines:

Icy winds tear asunder  
boiling thunder clouds,  
deliv'ring sun from  
Nature's rage. Still I'm  
a man, strong enough to  
be gentle, a free  
thinker, self-educated.  
At 22, old enough to  
discern wisdom's shadow,  
young enough to wonder,  
innocent in splendid  
solitude. Please,  
cultured older woman,  
show me the ways of life,  
and love.

Or this one, that breaks the rules...

Are you woman enough?  
Restless spirit, find  
high adventure on the  
uncharted tempest-toss'd  
seas of romance. Danger!  
Shipwreck, broken heart  
possible. Chance of  
glory, of forging a  
volcanic, passionate bond  
enduring until death  
sunders us. Only the  
courageous need apply.

Does this ad look just a bit familiar? It's actually our old friend, the arctic explorer ad from the beginning of the chapter, but in disguise. Would lonely women respond to this one as enthusiastically as adventure-seeking men did to the original?

Can a well-crafted personal ad (or reply to same) persuade a woman to respond to a man she would otherwise consider unsuitable? Conventional wisdom holds that expressive skill, words alone, can tilt the balance if she is uncertain, but hardly effect a complete transfiguration. This classic *assumption* needs some cold water thrown on it. Just as Orpheus, to rescue his fair Euridice, charmed the rulers of Hades with the power of his lyre, so likewise might one charm the heart of a hardened, embittered woman with the power of the pen, with words alone. Consider also how unpredictable we humans are. Only occasionally do we act rationally, and more often we grope our way blindly through a fever dream of wish and expectation. Our very desires, even our perceptions are in a constant turmoil. Yes, words, powerful words, can change a woman's mind and her heart... and her life. Maybe.

**This is but one perspective on ad writing technique. For a somewhat different approach, see the "One-and-only tips on writing ads".**

**Exercise #1: Write your own ad. Revise it. Show it to a trusted friend, if you like.**

### iii Placement

The [Village Voice](#), along with the *LA Free Press* and *Berkeley Barb*, can claim credit for pioneering the modern era of personal ads. What was once a solitary *voice* in the wilderness, or village as it were, has changed since then, and for the worse. The [Voice Personals](#), in common with many other publications carrying personals, have plugged into the **900-number scheme** both for responding to and retrieving responses from the ads. While the initial ad is "free," the associated costs may easily run into hundreds of dollars. Moreover, the costs of answering an ad via a 900-number can easily discourage someone who might otherwise respond by the traditional letter/note method. This is the dark underside of technology. It reduces what should be a correspondence by letter, nice and easy, unhurried, safe, to a series of frenzied phone calls. It kills the spirit of romance, not to mention plundering your pocketbook.

This brings up the question of whether it is worth spending hundreds of dollars to place one or more personal ads in what is essentially a gamble. This issue you will need to resolve according to your own judgment and circumstances. Those fortunate few for whom money is no object will have little to lose by placing multiple ads. For all the rest of us there are more attractive alternatives to spending hard-earned money on speculation.

The Usenet newsgroup [alt.personals](#), after a promising beginning in the early days of the Net, has more or less become a wastland of ads for X-rated spam and other foolishness. This mostly holds true for the entire *alt.personals* ??? newsgroup hierarchy, unfortunately. It is still worth a look, but might well be a complete waste of time as far as actually posting an ad.

The [Classifieds2000](#) site offers a good testing ground for placing an ad. There is no charge for ad placement on this popular site.

The [American Non-Profit Dating Service](#) features free personal ads, as do [Abracadabra](#) and [relationships.com](#).

[Curious Cat Personal Connections](#) offers free personals, as well as an array of information useful to singles.

[Yahoo](#) offers free personal ads as a benefit of its free membership. These are certain to reach a wide audience.

"Special needs" resources for personal ads include the [Personal Ads, Size Acceptance, Fat Acceptance](#) site for fat persons and their admirers and a dating site [for those with herpes](#).

Try the [Singles Sites Chat Site Directory](#) for a list of places on the Net to investigate for posting ads. Find additional sites by querying one of the Web search engines for the key words "personal ads."

Before placing an ad at a particular site, do some preliminary investigation to determine whether it is an appropriate place for you. Check the ratio of men's versus women's ads - it should be roughly equal, but in any case not wildly skewed in either direction. Read some of the women-seeking-men ads, to get a feel for the "demographics" of the site (what mix of women visit there and what types of men they are looking for).

[Dean Esmay](#) has written an excellent [Personals FAQ](#). This is required reading for those contemplating posting their ad online.

Consider using your own [web site](#) as a sort of personal "display ad." This alternative mode of advertising yourself holds some promise as a way of transcending the boundaries of the traditional personal ad.

**Exercise #2: Prepare a list of ten places to publish your ad. Narrow down the choices to the best three.**

**Exercise #2a: Actually place an ad in one or more of the places you have selected. Do not become discouraged if you fail to get immediate results, as it may take a month or more for your ad to build up "momentum." Remember, this is a *learning experience*.**

**Exercise #3: If your ad is moderately successful, it will pull in 5 or more responses. Exceptional ads might get as many as 50. How will you sort out the answers to your ad?**

**Hint: you are searching for a woman you can like and respect, and who will find you attractive. Look for intelligence and humor in the replies. Originality gets extra points.**

#### iv

### Answering Ads

The odds favor the person placing an ad over one who responds. Far better to have 30 respondents to your own ad to choose among than to be one of 30 responding to someone else's ad. All the same, there come times when you find someone else's ad so captivating that you would never forgive yourself if you did not at least give it a shot.

Consider the options available if you respond. Most likely, you would need to call a toll number, and pay by the minute. Your presentation will, of necessity, be short, attention grabbing, and to the point. You absolutely must distinguish yourself from all the other "candidates" who answer this particular listing.

Take the time you need to develop a "script" for your five-minute one-man show. Pencil and paper are your tools, and a tape recorder and stopwatch useful accessories. Outline what you want to say, then edit and revise, revise, revise. With your final script in hand, rehearse aloud until your playlet rocks and rolls. Put on your favorite music (softly) in the background, pick up the phone and let your voice flow, smooth, effortless, and convincing. Remember - rhythm, pacing, timing, and *always leave 'em wanting more*.

If you respond via U.S. mail or e-mail, this gives you a chance to display your expertise in the classic art of letter writing. As necessary, refer to the pointers given in the previous chapter on [writing love letters](#). Consider that this is not the two of you alone, rather, you are trying to make your voice heard above the

crowd. Your epistle will be competing with those of many unseen rivals. A "generic" note will get only a cursory glance, if that. Again, aim to have your response **stand out**. A neat handwritten letter gets more attention than a typed or computer-printed one. A photocopied form letter heads straight for the trash. Write creatively, seek the unusual, listen to inspiration, and revise, revise, revise. Keep file copies of your previous correspondence, and learn from mistakes.

Dear Kindred Soul,

A bolt out of the blue! Your ad rattles my dusty (cough, cough) heart and ignites in me tender emotions, the likes of which I thought my cranky old soul no longer capable of. Tell me, disturber of my tranquility, what shall become of me now?

<There follow three or four paragraphs specifically addressing the concerns expressed in the ad, and especially why this particular woman absolutely must be the one for you.>

Now, as for myself, I am a 99-year-old single geezer (don't look a day over 80) pursuing a rewarding career in paleoanthropology, after having retired from a lucrative veterinary practice treating Pet Rocks. My interests include bottle-cap collecting, restoring Louis XVI furniture, perpetual motion machines, reverse engineering UFO propulsion systems, searching for the Fountain of Youth, and handcrafting intricate clothes hangers out of rusty barbed wire. I live in a luxurious renovated yurt on a rock-strewn windswept hillside overlooking the exclusive high-rise apartment developments bordering the Gobi desert. Keeping me company are 15 gerbils, 3 yaks, and a platypus, but when the moon is high and the wolves howl, I find myself aching for the sound of a human voice and a woman's touch.

<Several more amusing-but-descriptive paragraphs about yourself.>

Despite society's best efforts to tame my free-roaming spirit, I remain something of a romantic. And yes, I need a good caring woman to share my life.

Yours,

Mortimer J. Hamurabi  
(My friends call me Morty)



And if you just have to do something, anything, even though you know you have just one chance in a billion...

Dark Lady of the Sonnets,

Profoundly moved by your ad. At a loss as to how to respond, since I am totally, totally unsuitable according to your strict, all-too-strict specifications. Stubbornly unable to admit defeat, and, in any case, find it less painful to engage in this utterly futile enterprise than to lie awake bemoaning the cruel misfortune of having become enraptured by Nature's Fairest Creation, of whom I am no doubt unworthy. Have mercy, and say a little prayer for your devoted admirer, who shall remain forever sundered from you by the vagaries of the harsh fate of being born mortal, alas, merely mortal.

In tears, I am nevertheless yours,

Caleb Caliban

Ah, now *that* feels better. Expect no reply, but you will have moved her, hard-hearted though she may be.

Hard is the herte that loveth nought  
In May  
Chaucer

**Exercise #4: Pick out several woman-seeking-man personal ads on the Net or in a newspaper. Compose responses to them. This is a "dry run," as you will not actually be sending or posting your answers . . . unless you think you are ready to roll the dice.**

## V Alternatives

The best-kept secret in the business world is that **publicity** works better than advertising. Calling attention to yourself by getting in the news, becoming well-known by outstanding achievement or a timely "coup" is worth a thousand personal ads. Public personalities and "celebs" have no need to place or answer personal ads. On the contrary, their problem is fending off the advances of female admirers. You should only have such problems.

Going over Niagara Falls in a barrel and similar publicity stunts have their attractions, but the cost generally outweighs the benefits, to put it mildly. Much less hazardous is having yourself crowned *emperor*\* of your own patch of real estate, or, if you are truly ambitious, of the entire continent, complete with coronation ceremony attended by the regional and national press. Short of risking your life or making a complete fool of yourself, you may avail yourself of the many other opportunities for attaining a high profile locally, and

possibly on an even larger scale.

Volunteer your services to charitable organizations, or better yet, initiate your own project to help the poor or handicapped, or to teach the educationally disadvantaged to read. Bring artistic and cultural events to your town. Invite the bicycle racing association to schedule an event there. Get the area's artisans together to hold a crafts fair. Bring the carnival to town. Sponsor a "salon" for intellectual discussion. Organize the local painters and sculptors for an exhibition. Start a writers workshop. Even if your motives are not entirely altruistic, and you wish to obtain a bit of recognition for your efforts, still you will more than likely be forgiven, if you go about it in a good-humored and tactful way.

Other possibilities include becoming an established authority in your field of expertise, a person invited to write newspaper columns and appear on talk shows. Be it only a hobby or leisure time activity, if you are exceptionally talented or can teach it effectively, you can build your reputation on it.

Far better to be a "celeb," if only a local one, than a faceless figure behind a personal ad. However, it requires more imagination, resourcefulness, and truly, much more **daring**. These are qualities that all human beings, not just shy ones, should cultivate.

\* As it happens, in 1859, a certain Joshua Norton of San Francisco did, in fact, declare himself Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico. Surely, there was no shortage of womenfolk in *his* interesting life.

### Exercise #5: Brainstorm at least 5 ways to make a name for yourself.

## vi

### Final Words

"There ain't no cure for the summertime blues", nor is there one for loneliness. Think "tool", rather than "remedy". Placing or answering a personal ad will not necessarily make a fundamental difference in your social life, but it surely can be an interesting ride.

In the personal ad "game", as in chess, the rules are easy to learn, but the strategy is intricate and tricky. Similarly, the results are proportional to the amount and intensity of effort expended, and the level of skill attained is as much a matter of practice as of talent. Like chess, and much of life itself, "playing" the personals should be fun, as well as profitable. If you do it for the prize alone, you are missing the point.

An ad can, at best, only provide the opportunity to meet partners. A woman who answers your ad has made no commitment, beyond a willingness to speak with you **once**. Taking it from there, actually establishing a relationship is still a matter of personal contact, of the interaction between two isolated human beings. As yet, only words connect you . . . and words alone cannot bridge the gap, nor can they touch, nor kiss.

For a fictional take on the utility of *personal ads*, see [Personal](#).



Table of Contents

# HOW-2 Meet Women

by

**Cartaphilus**

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## Chapter 8

### Places

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#### i

#### Where Are They?

Women are everywhere. You encounter them at work, at the supermarket, on the street. She is the person in the apartment down the hall, your sister's best friend, the clerk at the convenience store, the one you bump into at the laundromat. Why then is it so difficult to connect? On the one hand, these women may not even be aware of your existence, and making yourself known to them - leaping the hurdle of the introduction and acquaintance period is, as yet, too daunting for your fledgling social skills. Conversely, perhaps you are already acquainted, familiar, all too familiar, commonplace, taken for granted and ignored.

Distance is the key concept here. An element of strangeness, the unknown, the exotic, all this hints at the intriguing possibilities of romance. It helps to be recognizable, yet not so well known that familiarity trivializes the budding relationship, and yes, breeds contempt.

The course of love is rocky, by custom, tradition, and myth. Romantic love thrives on adversity, on challenge, on resistance, on hindrances, on barriers to be overcome, on prohibitions, on taboos to be broken, on tension, on crises, on anguish, on despair, on secret meetings, on stolen kisses, on forbidden touches, on disapproving parents, on broken-glass topped walls that keep lovers apart. If matters proceed too easily, too smoothly, then the excitement gradually leaks out of the relationship, the tension dissipates, and matters slowly coast downhill toward the dreaded pronouncement of "let's just be friends".

#### ii

#### At Work

The workplace would seem the most logical place to find a lover. What could be more natural than to befriend, and to form close bonds with your colleagues? Working side by side, being on the same team, sharing responsibilities, basking in triumph and bouncing back from failure together, all this forges camaraderie. This can be the prelude to close friendship, even an intimate relationship or two.

At work, you see the same women, day after day. This situation favors a measured approach to enlarging your circle of female acquaintances. If you are a bit leery of asking to be introduced to someone you wish to meet, you can always practice a bit of subtlety. Smile at her one day. See if she returns your smile. If so, make a routine of exchanging smiles every morning and evening. Begin to wave 'hello' to her. Finally, you might get to

the point where you actually exchange a few words... and things may progress from there. The advantage of this strategy is that either of you can stop, or even retreat at any point in the process without undue embarrassment or trauma.

A workplace romance with a subordinate, or, worse yet, with a supervisor, can be risky. It may interfere with the performance of your duties and jeopardize your advancement or even continued tenure on the job. Making an advance toward a fellow employee (or having one made toward *you*) could destabilize or upset the delicate relationships in your working group. Exercise caution, or, at the very least, discretion.

### iii

## Where To Look

### People close to home

Neighbors  
Friends  
Friends of friends  
People you grew up with  
Sisters of childhood friends

### Introductions by family members and relatives

Matchmaking maiden aunts have been subjected to ridicule for generations, but they have helped many a lonely man find the woman who finally brought him happiness.

### Religious services and functions

Sharing a common religious heritage and spiritual experience creates powerful bonds between people.

### School (continuing education, alternative education, night school)

Classes where there would likely be a high proportion of women:  
Gourmet cookery  
Foreign language instruction  
Literature  
Creative writing  
Music and fine arts  
Philosophy  
Sewing, embroidery, weaving  
Crafts instruction (pottery, silversmithing, stained glass)  
Medical technology and nutrition  
New Age / spirituality (astrology, tarot, *I Ching*)

## Activities and hobbies

Reading clubs and literary circles  
Poetry readings  
Writers workshops  
Discussion groups  
Amateur entertainment nights (singing / playing instruments)  
Cultural events  
Museums  
Concerts  
Street fairs  
Flea markets  
Folk, square, and country dancing

## Volunteer work and charity

Literacy programs  
Homeless shelters  
Soup kitchens  
Nursing homes  
Visiting the sick at local hospitals

## Community organizations, meetings

Political organizations and activities  
(Join your local Democratic or Republican club)  
Block or neighborhood association  
School board

## Sports

Bowling  
Tennis  
Badminton  
Volleyball  
Softball  
Skiing  
Swimming  
Bicycling  
Sailing  
Archery  
Miniature golf

## Gaming Clubs

Board Games  
-----

Your local Scrabble [TM] club,  
a great place to meet women and, incidentally, enjoy yourself.

Chess clubs are attracting an increasing number of women.

#### Bridge

If you can't play, learn...  
A "fourth" for bridge is always in demand.

#### Backgammon

### Hiking

The premier hiking organization remains American Youth Hostels (AYH). Despite its name, there is no age limit for membership, and people of all ages participate in its day trips, bike/hike outings, and other activities. With its annual membership fee still at about \$20 for adults, this is a great bargain.

Based on one person's experience of day hikes with the New York City chapter some years back, there always seemed to be a sufficiency of single women in the 20 - 60 year age group participating, certainly enough to keep things interesting. As the word got around that this was a good way for women to meet eligible men, the proportion of women to men on the trips increased from an average 1:3 to as high as 2:1.

AYH  
8401 Colesville Road, Suite 600  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 495-1240  
(301) 495-6697 Fax  
hostels@hiusa.org  
<http://www.hiayh.org>

### Supermarket shopping

Become a "regular" at your neighborhood store. Plan your shopping trips for the same days and times every week, and you will soon be greeted by name by the cashiers and the other shoppers, mostly women, will get to know you.

If you have eight cans of single-serving spaghetti in your cart, that is a dead giveaway to every woman in sight that you live alone.

A slightly "mussed" look, and a shirt with a button or two missing contributes to the impression that you are not being cared for, and in need of mothering. Expect to be approached.

### "Singles" organizations

At the bottom of the list, deliberately.  
This is a last resort option . . .  
for the desperate.

**The man who follows the crowd will usually get no further than the crowd.  
The man who walks alone is likely to find himself in places no one has ever been.**  
**Alan Ashley-Pitt**

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Scrabble is a registered trademark of the Milton Bradley Co., Inc.





# HOW-2 Meet Women

by

Cartaphilus

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## Chapter 9

### Party Time

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i

#### The Party Vegetable

Is it a party in a parlour?  
Crammed just as they on earth were crammed, --  
Some sipping punch, some sipping tea,  
But, as you by their faces see,  
All silent and all damned.

Wordsworth

Being shy, you probably regard an invitation to a party with about as much enthusiasm as the prospect of attending your own execution. Just think, you could be standing there in the shadows by the back wall, surrounded by clusters of babbling strangers, feeling everyone's eyes on you (is your fly open?), in one hand a slowly leaking warm soft drink that has long since gone flat, in the other a limp stalk of celery oozing what is allegedly cheddar cheese dip. Your feet ache, your stomach is painfully knotted and spasming, and rivulets of sweat have long since dried on your forehead. This just might not be your idea of a fun time.

A strong case can be made for avoiding parties altogether. For the shy person, parties may be the worst of all possible places for meeting people and making friends, much less connecting with women. Parties have a justifiably bad reputation for stale food, rowdy and drunken behavior, and mind numbing stupidity on a massive scale. Calling them a monumental waste of time and energy would be something of an understatement. All the same, before dismissing parties altogether as an option, consider them... as an opportunity to practice and flex your newly developed social skills, to use your imagination, to stretch and extend your confidence muscles. Parties are a challenge, a test of your resourcefulness and ingenuity, an exercise in risk taking in the social arena, a leap into the unknown, a roll of the dice in the grand game of people.

Shy man, you are certainly no one's idea of a "party animal". *Party vegetable* comes closer to the mark. So be it. "Grow" into the role, if you can, if you dare, for good things come at the oddest of times and in the unlikeliest of places, even, heaven forbid, at social gatherings.

After all, what is your hosts' purpose in having a party?  
Surely not for you to enjoy yourself; if that were their sole  
purpose, they'd have simply sent champagne and women over to

your place by taxi.

P.J. O'Rourke

## ii Tactics

Preparedness is everything. Do your research before stepping through the door at that party. Find out who will be attending. If possible, meet and get to know a few of the people beforehand. Perhaps you can arrange to accompany one or more of them.

It's the day of the big party, and it looks like you'll be going alone. Call the host. Ask if he/she needs help with setting up the tables, with food preparation, with decorations. In any case, arrive early so that you can meet and have a few minutes alone with the host and at least a couple of the guests. Stay away from alcoholic beverages and do not overindulge in the indigestible snacks. ["Work the room"](#) if you are able to, if you dare. Do not linger if it threatens to turn into an unproductive evening, and time your exit.

Man who arrives at party two hours late  
will find he has been beaten to the punch.

You might well call attention to yourself by virtue of your costume, especially where everyone else attends in normal party attire, or in everyday wear. Rent a costume. Come as D'Artagnan (of the Three Musketeers), or as Cyrano. A neck ruff and tight fitting pantaloons will do wonders for your appearance. The saber at your side will also command respect, and more than a little astonishment. Act the part - swashbuckle. If you'll be making a fool of yourself, do it in grand style, and with panache.

In a pinch, the local thrift store or your aunt's attic can supply outmoded clothes, perhaps a Nehru jacket from the '60's or a snap brim fedora that was last fashionable in the Truman era. Ancient "claw hammer" tuxedo jackets still turn up on occasion. Matched or mismatched, you can provide an amusing counterpoint to all the stuffy, business-suited party goers.

Be part of the entertainment. If you play an instrument, be it a harmonica, a pennywhistle, or a lowly kazoo, so much the better. Strap on a guitar and belt out the first few notes of a ballad, and listeners will gather round. [Juggle](#) a few balls in the air and gaping onlookers will jostle each other for a closer look. An impromptu magic show is sure to draw an audience. Practicing the ancient lore of *storytelling* attracts those who have not yet lost the ability to exercise their imagination. Sketching funny caricatures of selected persons present, especially of women you'd like to know better, creates a crowd of curious rubbernecks. Even the prosaic art of [telling jokes](#) sets you apart from the other attendees.

For every girl of eighteen who can be broken down  
by feats of muscle power on the football field  
there are ten who will swoon into your arms at the  
sound of a Chopin waltz or mazurka.

F. Hoyle

### iii Doing It Yourself

Discouraged by all the bad times you've had at other people's parties? Well then, throw your own.

Keep it small, inviting only a few of your closer friends. Keep it simple, preparing a bare minimum of snacks and refreshments. Lay in a generous supply of juices and soft drinks, and show your good judgment (and courage) by avoiding alcoholic beverages altogether. Plan well ahead, and pay attention to small details. Get advice from others who have thrown parties.

Be sure to introduce the guests to each other, if they are not previously acquainted. On to fun and laughter-inducing games, such as 'charades', to encourage mingling, and, eventual pairing off by the singles. Then, dim the lights and put on slow music, suitable for close dancing. You, as the party facilitator, will find yourself free of any pressure to get close to any one particular woman, and for just that reason, it may happen of its own accord.

Any excuse will do. Your own birthday deserves a party, as do those of your friends, family members, and colleagues. There are major and minor holidays aplenty. Even a Groundhog Day party can be a memorable occasion.

The [Entertaining and Party Planning Tips](#) site gives some useful pointers, at least in the matter of preparing *hors d'oeuvres* and snacks. Likewise, the local library may have a few books on the topic of party planning. Your best resource, however, would be a friend or relative who has hosted a party or two of her own.

### iv Why

Parties are one of life's obscure and enigmatic gifts\*. As with anything guarded by a minefield, enshrouded in barbed wire, or buried in a manure heap, there must be a secret place... where there gleams something resembling treasure, or at a minimum a "meaningful experience". If the entrance fee is a just bit stiff, the prize beckoning from within may be worth it. Perhaps.

Parties are one of those social institutions designed to preserve and enforce the gap between the socially adept and the rest of us, the "losers". If, as previously stated, "For the shy person, parties may be the worst of all possible places...", what then is the point of this exercise? If a party is a microcosm of human folly, it is likewise an opportunity to sharpen your powers of observation, to learn to differentiate personality types by their behavior in social situations. It is a stage where you can act out your own secret pretensions. It is a defiant piece of theater, a dare accepted, a demonstration that even under the most unfavorable of circumstances, in a room full of semi-intoxicated, faceless, anonymous persons, the shy man can match his more socially adept colleagues in the art of mingling, of getting acquainted with strangers. It is a matter of experience, technique, self-confidence, and... principle. Witness that even this pernicious ritual, the social gathering, can be subverted to the advantage of a sufficiently motivated shy person.

**If a stanza of programming code can be analyzed, disassembled, and "hacked", then why not a social gathering? Can group dynamics really be all that much more complex than a convoluted subroutine?**

Is this, then, a "call to arms" for you as a shy man, an imperative that you absolutely must attend parties? On the contrary, it is a personal decision, a "judgment call", based on your needs, comfort level, readiness, and temperament. You will do perfectly well socially even if you never attend another party. Only be aware that you *could*, should you wish to.

\* The literal translation of *Gift* from the German is venom, or poison.



# HOW-2 Meet Women

by

Cartaphilus

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## Chapter 10

### The First Date

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At long last, you have reached the point in your blossoming relationship where you will be going out on a date. Your first date, a milestone, yet a bottomless pit of uncertainty. It's like being on a roller coaster, with the alternating surges of soaring giddiness and fright, the conflicting emotions of "can't wait" and "not yet". While overjoyed that you will be going out with \*her\*, there is still the gnawing anxiety that you will somehow blow it. Not to worry. It will certainly be something of an adventure, an event to reminisce and laugh about (*Oh, no! Not another learning experience!*), and you would not miss it for the world.

If possible, get plenty of sleep the night before, or at least take a short nap during the day. Shower and put on fresh clothes. Brush your teeth and shave, as necessary. Cologne and mouthwash are optional. Rely on those *comforting little rituals* that affirm your identity, and this will launch you on your journey, well rested, relaxed, clean, and feeling reasonably confident.

Be on time. You promised to be there at a certain time. Call ahead if circumstances will keep you from showing up as arranged. The trust between the two of you is still very new and fragile, and arriving late on a first date creates uncertainty and strains that trust.

On the way there, pick or buy a small bouquet of colorful wildflowers. It will not deplete your finances much, and will show how much you cherish her company. Flowers from your hand to hers... that happy little gasp of surprise, the warm flood of her smile, her smile for you alone.

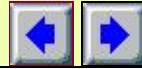
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The "classic," or generic date, not to be confused with the unconventional [creative / inventive date](#), consists of entertainment, followed by a meal, then a walk under the stars, and finally the leave taking. The entertainment usually defaults to a movie, though a live performance, a play or a concert, makes for a richer experience. There is no need to spend big bucks in an expensive restaurant. A simple meal in an atmospheric neighborhood cafe, the scarred wooden table covered by a stained, checkered cloth, with a guttering candle in a dusty wax bespattered wine bottle between the two of you as you scoop up forkfuls of pungently spiced, chewy spaghetti, occasionally catching shy glimpses of each other's eyes... all this will do just fine. Then the walk home, the time for quiet reflection and expressing feelings by glances and occasional words, this tops off a satisfying evening.

As you walk with her, by her side, matching your step to hers, in cadence, in harmony, she has the opportunity to take your hand . . . if she is so moved. Holding hands comes naturally, if it comes at all. **Do not force unwanted attentions on the woman! "Making a move" on her is neither required of you, nor desirable.**

She will touch you if she has been touched by your presence. If she wants to be touched, she will touch you.

Time for parting. "Goodbye. I enjoyed the evening and the pleasure of your company." You may take her hand, if she is amenable, for a goodbye hand squeeze. If she offers her cheek, you may kiss it, likewise her lips . . . if she offers. **Respond, rather than initiate. Physical closeness is her gift to you, given if and when the time is right, and a first date is rather soon.** "It was a wonderful evening. May I see you again?" It is the end of an evening . . . and perhaps a beginning.



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## Chapter 11

### Deepening the Relationship

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You have been dating a nice woman, and the two of you seem comfortable with each other and enjoy being together. *It feels right* being with her, but you have yet to touch, to hold hands, to exchange more than a hug and a nominal kiss or two. Where do you go from here?

 **Talk.** Set up lines of communication. Establish a rapport.

- Share your past, your pain and disappointments as well as your triumphs and joys.
- Laugh together, cry together. Humor is healing, and tears are sacred.
- Slowly and reverently peel back the layers of mystery in each other.

Every revealed nuance, every secret desire, every confession of weakness, every exploration of hope and admission of paralyzing fear strengthens the bond between the two of you, helps you connect with her as one human being to another, flawed but worthy of acceptance as a trusted and intimate companion.

 **Show her** how much you cherish her.

- Express appreciation of her beauty, her personal attributes, of those endearing traits and wondrous endowments that set her apart from the common run of humanity.
- Send her flowers and give her little gifts.
- Write her funny, but endearing notes.
- *Make her feel special.*

 **Share** interests, activities, and hobbies.

- Play games you both enjoy, board games, lawn games, tennis, handball, croquet.
- Prepare home cooked meals for her, and volunteer to wash the dishes when she cooks for you. Don't forget to praise her spaghetti sauce (made from an old family recipe, no doubt).
- Sing to her. Make up silly rhymes to tunes you know.
- Teach her computer lore. Surf the Net together.
- Take long walks together (hold her hand and hug her every once in a while).
- Tell her stories, true stories from your life and made up stories from your imagination.
- Write poems especially for her. They don't have to rhyme.
- Read aloud favorite plays, each of you taking a part ("Romeo and Juliet" comes to mind).
- Hug often.

- Learn French together.
- Write a novel as a team. Each of you do an alternating chapter.
- Make longterm plans. Look at houses for sale. Talk about your philosophy of raising kids.
- Hold each other tightly, and listen to her heartbeat.

#### Develop customs and "traditions" unique to yourselves as a couple.

- Celebrate the monthly anniversaries of your first meeting with a small party.
- Give her little, inexpensive presents (stuffed animals, key chain trinkets, bath soaps). The *personal touch* counts.
- Call each other by pet names.
- Remember "special" dates, not just her birthday.
- Create a shared "history".

#### Build trust.

- Be reliable.
- Act honorably.
- Treat her with respect.
- Keep your word. Always.

#### Learn how to disagree.

- Establish the 'rules of engagement', the ground rules for arguing.  
There is a line you may not cross without causing permanent injury.  
Remember, words are like bullets. Once loosed, they cannot be recalled.
- Listen to her and respect her opinions, even if you have to grit your teeth.
- Be willing to compromise your differences (as distinct from your principles).  
Making up after a fight can bring you closer than you were before.

#### Get to know her family, and introduce her to your own.

- Bring flowers for her mother and small presents for her kid brothers and sisters.
- Talk about family lore, about stories passed down the generations in her family and yours.
- Find out her father's interests and hobbies, then educate yourself about them.  
Now you can hold intelligent discussions with him and win his respect.
- If invited to dinner, offer to help with the cleanup.
- Family background gives important clues to a person's character.
- A long-term relationship is a bond between families, not just the two persons involved.  
When you marry a woman, you marry her family as well.

There comes that magic moment when you finally *touch*, when she fiercely grasps your hand of her own free will, when you start to give her the usual goodnight peck on the cheek and she turns her face to catch the kiss full on her lips (and, oh, how soft and yielding and warm they are!). This is a healing touch, an affirmative, giving touch. It is a pledge, a promise, a commitment, a seed cast upon the waters of tomorrow.



Consider the process, the dynamic of how two people become *one*, a couple. The two of you gradually grow closer, begin to have deep feelings for one another, and to *bond*. Past a certain threshold, you cease to think of the woman as someone you have been dating, instead she becomes the other half of *us*. This is the point where *commitment* enters the picture, commitment to the relationship and to the happiness and well being of your partner. This is the moment when you decide you don't want to live apart from her.

### Cautions

Since you are somewhat inexperienced in the realm of man-woman relationships, you will blunder at first, learning by trial and error, making painful mistakes. You force the pace, letting anxiety and impatience race ahead of what she is ready for, and bruise the fragile trust between you. You let personal insecurity drive you to acts of jealousy. You try to change, or "remodel" her. Your clever stratagems to pull her closer, to take possession of her -- drive her away. Sometimes, it seems as if all your efforts are self-defeating...

Be prepared for the possibility that the relationship may never "kindle." If such be the case, consider it 'training' for your next one. Get on with your life. Meet new people. Explore new relationships.

Finally, recognize that even a close relationship may go sour. Danger signs in a failing relationship include lack of respect between partners, constant bickering, and, most telling of all, power and domination dramas. If the two of you can no longer make each other laugh, give each other comfort by a touch, and share intimate moments, then there is little hope left. If your partner disparages and makes fun of you, there is not much remaining to hold on to. You can no longer evade hard choices, and the time has come to consider a graceful exit.

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing...

Shakespeare, *Sonnet 87*

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### Questions

I took a woman out for the first time, and we had an enjoyable evening together. We said our *goodnights* and kissed, but left it at that. Where do I go from here?

Assuming she gave you her telephone number, a follow-up call in the next day or two would be in order. As an alternative, consider sending her a note, accompanied by flowers.

I have no trouble meeting women and making friends with them, but as the relationship progresses, they inevitably lose interest in me. What am I

doing wrong?

You come on strong at the initial meeting, making a striking *first impression*. You have built up her expectations at this point. Then, as she gets to know you better, she finds out that there is not all that much beneath the impressive looking exterior. You promise much more than you deliver.

When first meeting a women, hold back in reserve something of yourself. If "that's all there is", of course you will disappoint her later. Even more important, develop yourself as a multifaceted human being. Cultivate some interests and become a deeper person. Keep growing and renewing yourself.

How will I know that she is the one for me?

"Love at first sight" is a verifiable phenomenon, but don't count on it happening to you. More commonly, it will gradually dawn on the both of you, during the course of the relationship, that you have a special bond, and perhaps, just perhaps are meant for each other.

What does she think of when she's with me?

Most likely she has the usual culturally imposed anxieties. "*Does he like me? Have I done something wrong? Do I look good?*" Getting past that, to the point where you can create ties of friendship and trust, where you can relax in each other's company - this is what will make or break your relationship.

I've dated this woman only a couple of times, but there seem to be a lot of "accidental" touches between us. She brushes against me quite often, hold onto my arm, even touches my cheek affectionately. Does this mean she's attracted to me?

This is a good sign. At the very least, it indicates she trusts you enough to risk breaking the first physical barrier between the two of you. Touch is meaningful. Very likely she wants to get closer to you. Gently encourage her.

How can I be sure she loves me?

You *can't*.

How can I test her love?

Relationships are based on *trust*. "Testing" her love violates that trust and demeans both of you.

I'm just about at the point of telling her that I love her. I can't hold my feelings back any more, but maybe I'm getting just a bit "ahead" of her. I seem to have stronger feelings for her than she does for me. What should I do?

Be aware that saying those magic words -- "I love you" -- will not automatically trigger the love reflex in her. It may even have the opposite effect of getting her to back off. Go a bit slower, and give her time to catch up with you.

I thought I had a good relationship with my girlfriend, but she seems to be losing interest in me. We had something beautiful, but it's slipping away. What can I do?

The question is, at what point a relationship is still worth fighting for. Can it be salvaged? Is it even worth saving?

If either of the following holds true, then you have something worth reclaiming.

- You have both made a meaningful commitment to each other.
- She returns your affections.

Just the fact that you have a huge emotional investment in the relationship is not in itself sufficient... if she does not share your level of commitment. If she does not have strong feelings for you by now, then the odds that she will ever commit to you, much less come to love you, are abysmally low. It's time to think seriously about cutting loose.

I'm very inexperienced in the ways of life and love. What will I do when it actually comes time to be intimate with a woman?

Making love to a woman, and doing so well and truly, requires only patience, sensitivity to her needs, and imagination. It is less a matter of talent than of devotion to the woman's comfort and pleasure. Becoming an accomplished lover is a process of learning and transformation, the work of a lifetime.

To lovers I [bequeath] their imaginary world, with whatever they may need, as the stars of the sky, the red, red roses by the wall, the snow of the hawthorn, the sweet strains of music, or aught else they may desire to figure to each other the lastingness and beauty of their love.

Last will and testament of Charles Lounsbury (1897)



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Cartaphilus

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## Chapter 12

### Traps and Pitfalls

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Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Lewis Carroll, *Through The Looking Glass*

Meeting and dating women may be hazardous to your health, and in particular, to your emotional well-being. Risks include making a fool of yourself, subjecting yourself to humiliation and ridicule, being exploited, and, of course, heartbreak. Worse yet, you may be done in by your very success and end up in a bad relationship. As a shy man, you are particularly vulnerable, due both to your very lack of experience in the dating arena and your romantic nature. Proceed with caution.

i

"Here there be tygers."

Predators stalk the shadows. Here lurk "users" and "players," schemers who would take advantage of you, who would betray your trust, who would profit from your painful loneliness and desperate need for affection, who would turn your deepest longings against you, who would manipulate you for their own purposes. Women, even sweet gentle women, alas, bear within them the same demons, the same depths of rage, the same capacity for corruption and depravity . . . as you and I.

#### Character Weaknesses

- Cruelty, viciousness, as expressed in mockery and putdowns.
- Immaturity, as expressed in "games playing", blame laying, whining.
- Superficiality, as expressed in vanity, flightiness (short attention span), pettiness.
- Lacking in intelligence.
- Lacking in wisdom and *common sense*.
- Lacking in integrity and basic honesty.
- Lacking in compassion and generosity.
- Lacking in inner strength (courage).

A woman displaying one or more of these traits has a flawed personality, and should be considered a

high-risk partner, even for a short-term relationship.

Becoming involved with the wrong person is a certain prescription for unhappiness. The adage that "it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" is scant comfort to the man courting a woman who does not return his affections. This is the dreaded "*one-way love*" scenario\*. Nearly as nerve wracking to deal with is the woman who is not quite sure that she loves you, who plays up to you when you start to distance yourself, yet pulls away when you want closeness. Every variety of *games playing*, every deviation from honesty and integrity undermines a relationship at its very foundations and diminishes both people involved.

\* In the mirror-image situation, should you not wish to pursue a relationship with a woman who is attracted to you, *be kind to her*. Show her compassion, remembering all the times you were in her place. By all means, be honest about your intentions, but respect her feelings, and let her down easy. While you do not owe her your company, at least treat her with respect.



When one is in love, one always begins by deceiving oneself, and one always ends by deceiving others.

That is what the world calls a romance.

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Avoid entanglements with married women, for very commonsense reasons. Not only might you be undermining a family relationship, perhaps hurting children in the process, but you run the risk of encountering an angry, and possibly armed husband. While adultery is no longer a punishable offense in most jurisdictions, it remains immoral, unethical, and certainly dangerous conduct.



A woman *on the rebound* from a failed relationship presents a ticklish problem. True enough, she is needy of

affection, of healing, and will be grateful for your presence, your solace. Still, her feelings for you will be flickering and tenuous, her moods changeable, her attachment to you shaky. She will alternately cling and push you away. She will sweeten your existence... and bring you misery. You will constantly be asking yourself whether it is worth it.



**If you are over age 18, stay away from young girls.  
It is a crime for an adult male to consort with an underage girl, *as well it should be.***

**In all your loneliness, take care in awarding your affections. You will find your partner and mate, your intended... in time, and likely after weathering disappointments and collecting a few bruises. Beware of imposters.**

**The things ye do, by two and two  
You must pay for, one by one.**

**Kipling**

**ii**

**It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time**

**Judgment comes from experience,  
and experience comes from bad judgment.**

**Simon Bolivar**

**Social pressure can deny you the choice of a mate. *They say* she's too young, too old, too poor, too rich, or otherwise "wrong for you". Don't let the people around you drag you down and hold you back from a relationship (as in the movie, *Marty*). Strangely enough, in the company of women, friends provide emotional support and sensible advice (usually), while among men, the opposite seems to hold true. Your good buddies may not want you to have a girlfriend, for reasons of envy or simple fear that you may leave them behind. You might have to choose between your friends... and your happiness.**

Blind dates must surely be the greatest boon to humankind since the invention of the guillotine. A friend or family member thinks they are giving you a break by "setting you up" with a woman *just right for you*. Of course, you and your date have absolutely nothing in common, and it invariably turns out to be a waste of an evening and \$30 or so, at best. At worst, it will be a total catastrophe, and that oh-so-helpful matchmaker might just be having a good laugh at your expense.

A singles bar can be a chamber of horrors for a shy person. Such locales have long since been the domain of aggressive males, the predatory "jock" crowd, the phony cowboys, who quickly show their resentment of "nerds" intruding on their hunting grounds. The women there - jaded pseudosophisticates, case-hardened veterans of the fast living booze-and-cocaine set, and other such burnouts - are an unpleasant reminder of how

just much damage victims of the "dating wars" can suffer. Think of a badly smeared Hieronymous Bosch painting.

**At the narrow pass, there is no brother, no friend.**

Arab proverb

The on-line "singles bars" - the chat rooms and the newsgroups in the soc.singles hierarchy likewise present a bleak landscape. They evoke unpleasant memories of a high school locker room, complete with bragging, lies, and insults. All that is missing is the smell of rancid sweat and the snap of a towel, followed by a quick yelp of surprise.

Male predators abound here, too, at times even masquerading as women. Cynicism is the rule. Shyness and sensitivity attract ridicule and gratuitous nastiness. Sneering vitriol is the coin of the realm here. Newcomers and outsiders are fresh meat for the regulars, and might just as well wear a "kick me" sign. These are the preferred haunts of emotional amputees and losers.

Even more degraded, if that is possible, is the [alt.seduction.fast](#) newsgroup. Several species of wildlife hang out here. Dominant are the hulking **SIMPs**, Slimy IMbecile Predators, their knuckles dragging in the dirt, snarling, intimidating the lesser denizens. Then there are the **PIMPs**, Parasites IMpersonating Predators, the **WIMPs**, Whiny IMitation Predator-wannabes, **BLIMPs**, Bogus Lying IMPosters, and finally, warily circling the flickering campfire like hyenas scenting rotting meat, the **SPAWN**, Sellers of Panaceas And Worthless Nostrums. Visiting this self-proclaimed predator "water hole" gives a surrealistic preview of where bad boys go after they die.

**A cheap shot is a terrible thing to waste.**

Jo Haemer

### iii

#### Loving Too Much

**Affection is a coal that must be cool'd;  
Else, suffer'd, it will set the heart on fire...**

Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*

**Love**, the heady wine of true love, puts a bounce in your step, bloom in your cheeks, sparkle in your eyes. It makes the blood smoke through your veins, turbocharges your spirits, and ignites your enthusiasm for living. For all that, love is quicksand. It is shark-infested waters. It is an avalanche, a riptide, a firestorm. The deeper the passion, the greater the capacity for hurt. Flaming passion blinds the senses, particularly common sense. Lover's intoxication is a mania, a deadly form of temporary insanity, a virulent disease, a treacherous pit, the hangman's trapdoor.

**Love is like the measles; we all have to go through it.**

Jerome K. Jerome

A *mature* relationship is not so much about jumping into bed and making passionate love, as it is about companionship. It is about being there when your mate needs you, about giving comfort when she hurts, about caring for her... and being cared for. It is about working side by side and solving problems together. It is about the commonplace. It is about figuring out how to pay the mortgage when money is tight. It is about washing the dishes and changing soiled diapers. It is about taking out the trash on a bitter cold evening. It is about



kissing her even when she has been getting on your nerves all day. It is about making up after fights. It is about caring even when you are angry at her. It is respect and affection and comfort and security, and even a bit of passion when the time and place are right. It is about getting accustomed to each other to the point that you fit together like a hand in an old, familiar glove. It is about being together.

**...you don't spend a marriage sleeping with a person but waking with her.**

Herman Wouk, *Marjorie Morningstar*

iv

### Loving Too Soon

**Will you still love me tomorrow?**

The Shirelles

**Becoming physically intimate too soon can be fatal to a relationship. It can shatter the slowly developing friendship and trust between the two of you. It magnifies and distorts feelings, clouds judgment, and superimposes cruel disillusionment on hopes and dreams ("Is that all there is?"). It narrows options and introduces tensions and pressures into what was a joyous and carefree acquaintanceship. It damns you for lack of respect for the woman, and for lack of patience and self-discipline. It is begging for trouble.**

Getting to know a woman, *touching* her is critically important in a relationship. Physical contact at the wrong time can intrude, hinder real understanding, block communication. You learn more about each other by joining your voices in song, by becoming one in music and lyrics and poetry, than by sleeping together. You get a deeper sense of communion by sharing a meal than by sharing a bed. Just holding hands or a gentle kiss can be more explosively effective in linking the two of you than "going all the way".

Physical intimacy implies *commitment*, responsibility, a sense of permanence. It is a promise, a contract. The two of you should be fully committed to each other *before* you seal the bond with lovemaking. Sex should never be undertaken lightly, without a full understanding of its implications... and consequences.



v

### Wrong Time, Wrong Place

A man and a woman exchange glances, perhaps smile at each other wistfully. He would like to talk with her. Unfortunately, they are seated in a New York subway car, and strangers *just don't* approach one another in

that setting. An opportunity irrevocably lost.\*

You get along extraordinarily well with a woman. You can talk with her, laugh with her, and she confides in you. When you touch, accidentally, a spark jumps from her hand to yours. Unfortunately, she is already involved with someone. If only you had met a couple of years back...

**We loved each other and were ignorant.**

Yeats

There is a woman you absolutely worship. She shines with an unearthly light from within. You hang on her every word. You look up to her. She owns your heart and your soul. She is the only one in the world who understands you, sympathizes with you, loves you. Unfortunately, you are still in the fourth grade, and she is your teacher...

The circumstances for meeting are not quite right. You are not yet ready for her. She is not yet ready for you. Bad timing. You are waiting for her, but she is not there. She is waiting for you, but you are not there. Missed connections. She is flirting with you, but you are unsure if she is serious. You are flirting with her, but she is unsure whether to take you seriously. Misunderstandings. Different maturity levels. Age difference. Mismatched socks. Wrong phase of the moon. The sun got in your eyes. Bad luck.

---

\* Lost, but perhaps not irretrievably. If you just happened to be wearing a T-shirt with your e-mail address colorfully emblazoned on it, you might find an interesting message from her waiting on your computer. A pullover or even a dress shirt with the e-mail address tastefully embroidered over the breast pocket works, too, though it would not be as easily visible. This is an example of how even a seemingly hopeless situation can sometimes be salvaged by ingenuity and foresight.

## vi

### Frauds and Distractions

**Ninety percent of *anything* is crap**

Sturgeon's Law

The success of commercial dating services demonstrates that truly "there's a sucker born every minute", as that great sage Phineas Taylor Barnum once noted. The dating service is the modern day successor to the *matchmaker* of bygone days, but minus the personal touch and service. Dating services are, by most accounts, both expensive and surprisingly ineffective at matching up lonely people, in no small part due to the imbalance of men to women who sign up. Moreover, consider how undignified, even humiliating it is, needing to pay a third party for the privilege of getting dates. Save your money. Save your self-respect. Avoid these outfits.

Nightclubs, dance studios, and popular "hangouts" have become a mainstay of the entertainment industry. These are frequented by a young, affluent, and socially active crowd. Shy people generally feel out of place and uncomfortable, even unwelcome at these locales. With a bit of imagination, you can find better places to entertain your date, and if you lack a date, you can think of more productive uses for your time.

Singles weekends, Club Zed, and Caribbean "love boat" cruises may be grand fun for the socially endowed, but for the shy man searching for companionship they are an expensive waste of time. If you are absolutely dead set on going on a cruise, become a tennis pro or renowned musician and get hired as staff.

Pheromones are subtle scents emitted by animals in mating season. Capitalizing on this, cosmetic manufacturers have begun marketing expensive colognes and preparations containing these exotic derivatives, touting them as the secret to attracting the opposite sex. Here is a perfect example of techno-scam, of

huckstering dubious "science" to the gullible and desperate. As anyone experienced in such matters knows, physical attraction takes place more in the mind than in the glands. Save your money.

Now even the medical establishment has discovered the cash potential of shyness. A certain pharmaceutical conglomerate is seeking FDA approval for its proprietary mood-altering drug as a treatment of "acute social phobia", an extreme form of shyness. Social dis-ease has become disease, a malady that can simply be medicated away. Save your money.



Then there are the so-called *date rape* drugs, GHB, ketamine, and rohypnol ("roofies", "rophies", or "roaches"). When slipped into the alcoholic drink of an unsuspecting victim, these drugs cause disorientation, partial amnesia, and sometimes unconsciousness. Forcing one's self on a woman rendered insensible by a drug, deprived of her free will - this is not an act of love, nor even by any stretch of the imagination an expression of passion, but an act of brutal violence, and a very serious criminal offense punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment.

## vii

### Dirty Little Secrets

**Women trade sex for love, men trade love for sex.**

Old saying, often found scrawled on lavatory walls

**Some self-styled "playboys", the modern day successors to libertines and rakes, boast that "coming on" to every woman they meet yields them a fair number of seductions, just by the "law of averages". If but one in a hundred women submits to their blandishments and crude enticements, then they should do rather well in the long run. This flawed logic fails because these clumsy amateurs rapidly manage to make themselves quite unpopular. They broadcast their unsolicited and usually unwelcome message to every woman within listening distance (this is somewhat analogous to "spamming" on the Internet, yet even more annoying). They acquire a reputation as pests and sleazeballs (the human equivalent of hemorrhoids), and find themselves shunned by decent people.**

The more subtle practitioners of the seduction art, the "smooth operators", more skilled at stealth and less obviously aggressive, often manage to make quite a nuisance of themselves before being neutralized. Frauds, swindlers, counterfeiters of affection, heartless, spineless, irresponsible and cruel, they victimize the women they use and subsequently abandon. These men style themselves lovers, but beneath the masque is emptiness.



Like a malignant cancer, poisoning the reputation of the entire male sex, there are those men who use fear as a tool to control the women in their lives. The threat of violence, and yes, the allure of it, plays on the helplessness and vulnerability of all too many women, generally with tragic consequences.

"My way or the highway." The lore of violence and abuse has been handed down from generation to generation, from father to son, from brother to brother, from friend to friend, in locker rooms, in trash literature, in the mass media. The popular culture has traditionally accepted, even glorified predatory methods for acquiring and holding on to women. Quite recently, in a somewhat belated fit of enlightenment, society has come to consider this pattern of behavior pathological, and it is punishable by law, *as well it should be*.

**All larger organisms, including ourselves, are living testimonies to the fact that destructive practices do not work in the long**

run. In the end, the aggressors always destroy themselves, making way for others who know how to cooperate and get along. Life is much less a competitive struggle for survival than a triumph of cooperation and creativity.

Fritjof Capra, *The Web Of Life*



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# Afterword

**"When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro..."**

Hunter S. Thompson

## i

The author of *HOW-2 Meet Women* considers himself a card-carrying nerd, even to the extent of wearing a pocket protector. He is, among other things, a programmer, software developer, and technical writer\* (author of a Guide and a HOWTO for the [Linux Documentation Project](#) and a past contributor to *Electronic Design* magazine and the [Linux Gazette](#)). Although happily married for over a decade, he will never forget his origins, his long lonely bachelor years.

If *HMW* has something of the flavor of a technical "howto", this is hardly accidental. It approaches the topic from the standpoint of an engineer, stressing algorithms (methods) that facilitate getting the job done. The book is based on the premise that a functional relationship with a woman is as intricate and awe-inspiring a structure as a well-designed suspension bridge or an elegant digital logic circuit. From that point of view, human interaction becomes, in a sense, an elaborate exercise in problem solving, and moreover something that can be codified and taught in bite-sized chunks. A touch of subjectivity and humor flavor the brew, but without diluting its emphasis on the practical. The intended audience is primarily shy single men, but much of the content is gender neutral, and the author has received favorable comment on it from women.

## ii

**In a bygone era, hard-won wisdom gained from lore and accumulated experience passed from father to son, or from master to apprentice. Guilds and secretive elites jealously guarded specialized knowledge. Keeping the masses ignorant circumscribed their lives and preserved the *status quo*. The invention of the printing press, and, in our own time, the personal computer changed all that and gave access to virtually unlimited information to any sufficiently motivated literate person. On balance, this seems a favorable development, but it has drastically accelerated the pace of social change and let loose the demon of unbridled technology. It has made possible the publication of information that can cause unintended consequences.**

**The major advances in civilization are processes that all but wreck the societies in which they occur.**

Alfred North Whitehead

There were ethical issues to consider before releasing *HOW-2 Meet Women* upon an unsuspecting public. Certain of the techniques contained therein could potentially be used by unscrupulous men to seduce and exploit women. Yet, it must be assumed that predators and manipulators already have the requisite knowledge for plying their sinister trade, as indeed they have been with such devastating effect for all of recorded history and beyond. And the need is there, it is painfully obvious, to put shy men on something of an equal footing

with their more socially adept fellows. In a sense, this is part of the evolutionary "arms race" between predators and decent people, and any step taken toward equalizing matters is a blow for civilization.

### iii

The question naturally arises whether the author is holding anything back, if important revelations and secrets have been omitted from this book. The short answer is a simple yes. Some topics are too inflammatory, ethically ambiguous, or perhaps just a bit too "advanced" to appear in what is essentially a primer on acquiring the social graces and establishing relationships. Moreover, some things are better left undiscussed, remaining to be discovered by those blessed (or damned) few who are capable of coupling bitter experience with rare flashes of insight. The readers of this book, and most of the rest of the human race for that matter, will likely be none the poorer for remaining ignorant of this dangerous higher wisdom.

### iv

So, where do we go from here? The author will continue to put words on paper, or, as it were, onto his Web site. You, the reader, will continue your quest, somewhat wiser hopefully, to realize your human potential. Men will continue to seek women, and women men... and the world will go on with business as usual.

The author wishes to bestow his admittedly limited blessings on the readers of *HMW*. You deserve your shot at happiness.

**May you have passionate and fulfilling relationships.**

**Never eat at a place called Mom's.  
Never play cards with a man named Doc.  
And never lie down with a woman  
who's got more troubles than you.**

**--Nelson Algren  
"What Every Young Man Should Know"**



[Comments](#)

## **"Don't applaud, throw money"**

**\* The author is available for writing and documentation projects. Fee negotiable.**



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## Of Soup Stones and Inspiration

There is an ancient folktale about a wanderer who pulls a magical soup stone out of his pack and shows it to the astonished villagers. Asked to demonstrate it, he has an onlooker fetch a cauldron, into which he places the stone, with appropriate ceremony and gestures. Now, he requisitions a bunch of carrots and several large onions from the village storehouse. Eager volunteers contribute beans, scraps of meat, and various spices, all of which goes into the pot. Two strapping young peasants fill the pot with water from the nearby well and hang it over the communal hearth. The water begins to bubble, and soon a tantalizing aroma fills the air. The wanderer sniffs at the soup, tastes it, then nods sagely. He reaches in with a ladle, removes the stone, and returns it to his pack after letting it cool. The grateful villagers fill a large wooden bowl with the delicious soup for him, and he eats until his belly can hold no more. His hunger satisfied, he departs, leaving behind him a wondrous tale of a magical stone that conjures up the best soup that anyone can remember.

The soup stone did not, of course, add any of its own essence to the soup, nor was it even strictly necessary, except as a causative agent. Consider the soup stone as a catalyst, a substance that facilitates change without itself being affected. Likewise, think of HOW-2 MEET WOMEN as a catalyst, as words that can inspire and perhaps bring about change in the person reading it, evocative words, magical words. This book is a *soup stone*. You need only add to the pot the ingredients of motivation, willingness to learn, and self-discipline... then turn up the heat and let the water boil.





# Rejection

Thought is born of failure.

L.L. Whyte

Rejection, rejection by a woman, rejection by *the* woman, the woman who has captured your thoughts, the woman whose smile sends delicious shivers of warmth down your spine, the woman whose touch you dream of ... this icy doom fills you with dread. It is the utter desolation of helplessness. It is the worm of self-doubt. It is the gripping fear that warns you to abandon hope.

...and once a boy has suffered rejection, he will find rejection even where it does not exist -- or, worse, will draw it forth from people simply by expecting it.

John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

Rejection is a part of everyday life. People are turned down for raises, refused promotions, declined for loans, and passed over for recognition. Rejection is not final. Rejection is not failure. Rejection is not ruin. Indeed, rejection is the necessary precursor to eventual triumph.

There is nothing personal about rejection. It happens to everyone. It is part of "the cost of doing business". It is intimately connected with *risk taking*. Every worthwhile endeavor at some point involves the risk of failure. That is what makes life interesting.

The odds are that you will be rejected, will fall flat on your face 5, 10, even 20 times before you taste success. Go on out and get the rejections over with, and you will be that much closer to your goal. Learn a little from each denial, and continually refine your technique.

It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all. And often enough our faith beforehand in an uncertified result is the only thing that makes the result come true.

William James

Consider a rejection as a "second opinion" of sorts. The woman who rejects you could well have sounder judgment in the matter of a possible relationship than you. She might have compelling reasons for her conclusion that you are ill suited for each other, saving the both of you a good deal of future grief. This does not, of course, mean you are worthless as a person, just that she was not meant for you, and that you should find someone else.

There are techniques that can remove some of the sting from the fear of rejection. Simply "scoping the situation out", proceeding in small steps rather than taking the grand plunge all at once, is a prudent method of risk management. Asking a woman you have just met to become intimately involved with you is an enterprise almost certain to fail. Asking her to share five minutes over a cup of coffee is a more modest proposal, one much more likely to meet with her approval (after that, she may hint, or

even tell you outright if she is willing to go farther). **Tackle tricky situations in small increments.**

**When you do face rejection, and you will, accept it with good cheer. Bounce back and try again (presumably with a different woman). Continued life experience will desensitize you to the trauma of having doors slammed in your face. You learn to survive. You learn to go on. You learn to keep trying.**

Since everything in life is but an experience perfect in being what it is, having nothing to do with good or bad, acceptance or rejection, one may well burst out in laughter.

Long Chen Pa



## **Learning to Love Another A Pet**

**Consider adopting a homeless pet from a local shelter. Looking after a pet can teach you much about loving, about learning to share warmth and give of yourself, about taking responsibility. A pet returns affection and loyalty for the care and love it receives. It is a simple way to discover the rewards of loving and caring, but without the sticky complications of a human relationship.**

**Loving a pet is more than petting and playing with him, more than the look of gratitude in his eyes when you feed him. It is walking him late at night in cold, rainy weather. It is cleaning up the messes she makes when she knocks over the trash. It is cancelling a long planned vacation because you cannot find a neighbor to feed her while you're away. It is having to pass up that great condo apartment because pets are not allowed. It means messing up your plans and disrupting your routine... to care for another. It means inconveniencing yourself, making sacrifices, and putting another's needs ahead of your own. It's a total commitment... just like a relationship with a woman.**



## Overcoming Nervousness

Meeting a woman for the first time (or even the fifth time) can precipitate a crisis of nerves. It is an all too familiar feeling, that hard knot in the stomach, the clenching behind the jaw, the sweaty palms, red face, stammering, being unable to swallow. You panic, choke up, and it is a major relief to escape from the situation. Another opportunity blown.

Beneath nervousness lurks shattering fear, the stuff of childhood nightmares. Admit the fear. Confront it. You fear making a fool of yourself. You fear messing up. You fear rejection. You fear ridicule. You fear mocking laughter. You fear what fear itself is doing to you, breaking down your resolve and triggering the reflex to run and hide. Yet, you *can* grit your teeth and fight back. Know you can be afraid, and still do what needs to be done.

I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.

"Bene Gesserit Litany Against Fear"  
from Frank Herbert's "DUNE"

Learn to control the physiological manifestations of nervousness. **Breathing is the key.** In the midst of an attack of nerves, you are taking frequent shallow breaths, hyperventilating, superoxygenating your blood, overloading your system with adrenaline. Discipline your breathing. Inhale deeply, but only at the rate of once per six seconds (this is the rhythm of the pounding surf). Hold breath, count cadence, 1---2---3---4---5---6, breathe, hold, 1---2, exhale. The rhythm becomes automatic, no longer requiring your conscious attention. Now, silently, within yourself, chant a favorite poem, or an appropriate mantra, "I-shall-endure, I-shall-endure...". Visualize a deep reflecting pool, a pool of cool, clear water - an island of stillness in the eye of the storm. Cup your hands and drink of the soothing, tranquil liquid. Let the healing cold trickle down your throat and wash away the tightness. Your pulse rate gradually slows, the tension drains from you, and the perspiration dries as calm returns.

Distance yourself from the woman talking to you, exciting you, yes, but crippling you with anxiety. Need, desperation, and loneliness have dragged you into a whirlpool of hyperacute emotional sensitivity. It is as though your feelings were a raw open wound, and a single touch means agony. Weakness! Vulnerability! In your mind, put up a shield, construct an invisible barrier between the two of you. Imagine someone else is there, someone less threatening, perhaps a childhood acquaintance or your third grade teacher. This effectively removes the emotional charge from the encounter.

You and the woman across from you are, as yet, strangers to one another, all possibilities unrealized, and you cannot, will not impinge upon each other, neither physically nor yet in the realm of feelings. You are only just building a bridge to each other, "establishing diplomatic relations". It is a small, *safe* beginning.

In time, you will learn to harness the motive force, the savage power, the explosive energy that fuels your mind and body's reaction to challenge. Fear can mobilize, rather than paralyze. Think of it as a resource, a reservoir of energy. Harness it. Use it. Learn to fly with it.

Life only demands from you the strength you possess.  
Only one feat is possible -- not to have run away.

Dag Hammarskjöld



## Self-Image Repair

I hold up a mirror to myself, a mirror, a metaphorical mirror, a simulated mirror. Who lives there behind those eyes, beneath that mask I wear to shield me from the outside world? Where is my center, my inner self, my identity? What do I see there? A strong and competent man, or a weak and hesitant one, unsure of himself, fumbling, afraid?

**Who am I?**

**Who am I?**

**Who am I?**

Close your eyes, clench them closed, hard, and look, look inward. Feel the pattern, touch it, imagine the matrix of blinding, blue-white pinpoints burning, burning hotter than the fires of Hell; explore the blazing, erupting cascade of energy, the star cluster at the center of your galaxy, the nucleus at the center of your primeval atom, at your center, at the center of YOU. This is the source, the source of your power, your heat, your light, your radiance, your life energy. This is you.

Guard yourself, ward yourself carefully, protect your innermost core. Keep a balanced perspective, staying aware of your flaws, knowing that these do not make you any the less a good and decent and worthy person. Draw strength from your talents, the things you do well, and extend from there. Build a fortress, a retreat, a quiet space within you, a retreat from the demands and abrasions and impersonal cruelties of a harsh and coldly indifferent world.

## How you see yourself How others see you

There is a powerful feedback cycle operating here. If you know yourself (and act accordingly) as a man confident in his strength, a man to be reckoned with, people tune in on this and send back respect, even admiration. Likewise, the feelings of those around you tend to seep into your awareness. All the more reason to keep your private self, your private thoughts and feelings *private*, not to share with strangers, with people who have not earned your trust. Limit your exposure, your vulnerability to the anxieties, neuroses, prejudices, and manipulations of the world outside yourself.

Create a support system of friends and acquaintances who reassure and validate you. Avoid those who tear you down, the destructive ones, the users, the energy vampires who live off your life-blood. In extreme cases, a change of scenery may be indicated, a new start among people who do not know you from your previous life.



# Loneliness

There is a fundamental human need for companionship, for a sympathetic ear, for reassurance, for hearing my feelings and sentiments echoed back, for *touching* and being touched. Being alone is sensory deprivation, slow torture, and my soul cries out for the company of a kindred spirit, for the comfort that only a friend can give, for someone who can fill the emptiness, who can share the isolated moments of my existence.

Loneliness weakens the spirit. It consumes my strength and dims my inner flame. It tempts me to wallow in self-pity, to descend into a kind of gloomy rapture, depressed and paralyzed, yet at the same time glorying in my own misery, suffering proudly in a private hell. For all that, loneliness is a state of mind, an affliction of the soul rather than an external condition, and it is entirely within my power to fight it, and perhaps work toward self-healing.

Resisting loneliness is more than just "keeping busy", immersing myself in so many activities that I have no time to reflect on my sad state. It means following my interests, improving my skills, developing myself as a multifaceted individual. It's about going out and meeting people, making contacts, learning to survive in a social context. It means *living my dream*, not at some future time when I might finally be in a relationship, but NOW.

"I was taught to feel, perhaps too much  
The self-sufficing power of solitude."

Wordsworth

Aloneness is the riddle I must solve in order to be worthy of the companionship of others, and therein lies the central paradox of being alone - that it can either ennoble, or degrade. The essential difference between **aloneness** and **loneliness** is the anguish, the acute hunger for contact that the lonely suffer. Could I but consider solitude a necessary journey of discovery, a crisis that may ultimately purify and strengthen me, then I might emerge from this *Dark Night of the Soul* uplifted and exalted, more fully realized as a person. Once comfortable in my own company, reconciled to the austere beauty of silence, of privacy, of total self-sufficiency, only then can I travel onward and explore the horizons of interaction, of exchange, of binding with my fellow humans.

"...the thinking man is driven... to long desperately for some  
quiet place where he can reason undisturbed and take  
inventory."

Richard Byrd, *Alone*



## Dancing

**The socially adept *dance* through life. Only seldom do they make a false step (*faux pas*), and instinctively they sense the nuances of appropriate behavior. These fortunate people know when to assert themselves, to "make their move", and how to do so with practiced grace. Theirs are the skills of the dancer.**

By implication, an antidote to the maladroitness, the maladaptation, the *clumsiness* of the shy is simply learning to dance. Dance is *poetry*, it is economy of motion, it is the greatest return for the least effort. It is a doorway to escaping the confinement of your ego prison, of becoming part of a transcendent unity, a group organism unfolding in motion. It is flight for the earthbound, a kaleidoscope for the blind, a shattering release for the unfeeling.

**The dance floor is a metaphor for the social arena, a microcosm of the greater Game of Life.**

Dance presence represents a mind set, an attitude, a bearing that communicates confidence and sense of direction on the dance floor. It means intuiting where the other dancers in your radius of action are, your position and motion relative to them, and anticipating how your movements will interact with them. Underlying everything is an exquisite sense of timing. Presence, life presence is all this, but generalized to Real Life.



Couples dance unfolds the mysteries of touch, of subtlety, rhythm, and balance. Holding a dance partner glides you past the "sweaty palm" nervousness of actually touching a woman, and swinging your partner imparts the feeling of give and take, of the profound balance and flow that bind a man and a woman together, if only for the duration of the music.

The simple line dances are easily learned, and mastery of couple dances, folk and square, even ballroom, follows with practice. The sense of accomplishment at getting through an easy couple dance for the first time, a "Danish Masquerade" or "Road To The Isles", makes it all worthwhile, and the sheer fun of it is an extra bonus.

Ballroom dancing has made a remarkable comeback lately, and with good reason. It gives shy people the chance to experience physical closeness to the opposite sex in a safe setting. It teaches the skills of touching and harmonizing movements, of relating to that warm female you are embracing in a stylized dance flourish. It brings people together in a romantic, yet socially sanctioned manner.

*...ballroom dancing is conversation set to music.*

Arthur Murray

**Most areas of the country have folk, contra, ballroom, and square dance groups. Listings of times and places appear in local newspapers, and you can enquire in the rec.folk-dancing Usenet newsgroup on the Net. The dansegypsy, Door County Folk Festival, and Henry's Dance Hotlist pages give many links to folk dance groups across the country.**



*How can we know the dancer from the dance?*

W.B. Yeats, *Among School Children*



## Muscles?

Just how effective is body building as a way of making yourself more physically attractive? In our superficial, appearance-conscious culture, a slim, well-muscled man might indeed attract favorable attention from the opposite sex in certain situations... possibly. \* **That is hardly conclusive evidence that weightlifting improves one's chances of getting a girlfriend. Intellect is at least as effective as brawn in attracting a quality woman. Most critical, though, is *self-confidence*, one of those subtle changes that takes place inside as you develop and transform yourself as a person.**

**A program of regular exercise and activity is none the less important for maintaining both physical and emotional health. By all means, run, walk, swim, hike, bicycle, lift weights, and even climb mountains. Keep at it, at least one-half hour daily, and make it part of your lifetime self-improvement project.**

**Exercise tones and "optimizes" the body... and the self-discipline involved tones and optimizes the mind.**

**Moreover, eat a sensible, balanced diet, with lots of veggies and fiber - and avoid "junk foods". If you are fit and feeling fine, you will develop a better self-image, take pride in your appearance, and be more confident of your ability to cope with life's *little surprises*. Dealing with people, and with women in particular, will seem less formidable.**

**If you wish to transform your life, the principle remains the same - work on *yourself* first, then let the changes ripple out from you into the outside world. This is as true in the matter of "upgrading" your physical appearance as in all other things.**

**\* At present, sharply defined rippling muscle bulk is *in*. Next year coating yourself in mud and amputating body parts may be "kewl". Considering how irrational and fad-driven pop culture is, one never knows.**



## The First Impression

According to folklore and conventional wisdom, the *first impression* you make upon meeting a person sets the tone for the subsequent development of the relationship. A bad impression, therefore, constitutes an irrecoverable error. That being the case, you should always make it the highest priority to look your best in any situation in which you might meet people, and women in particular.

**Nonsense!** Shallow, superficial people judge others by "first impressions". It is an indication of intellectual laziness (and possibly brain damage), of an unwillingness and possible inability to reason deeply, analyze, and make informed decisions. A woman who makes a snap judgment of you based on a "first impression" is hardly worth bothering with.

In general, you, as a shy person, need not lose much sleep over what sort of "first impression" you make on people. It is quite sufficient to come across as 'neutral', relatively nondescript, incapable of being categorized and fitted into a convenient slot. You are a quiet and reserved person, enigmatic, profound and unfathomable, marvelous in your complexity, and you need wear no mask, no false flamboyance to intrigue others. If your style, your manner, your inner radiance *provokes others to think*, to pause, reflect and wonder, you will make an unforgettable impression.

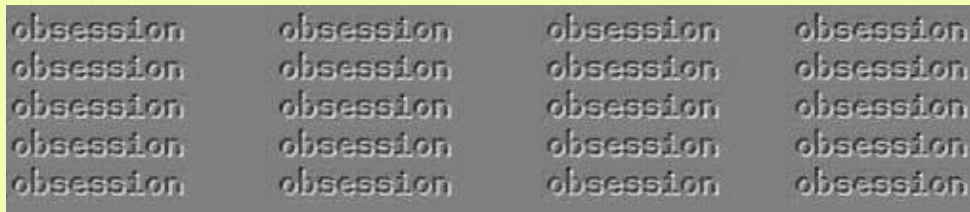
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## The Second Impression

Wisdom dictates holding back the most important parts of one's self at first contact, in favor of a gradual and orderly getting acquainted period. Getting to know someone, truly know them, is a slow and sometimes messy affair, full of risks and potential missteps, and only a fool would attempt to short-circuit the process by relying on a 'first impression'. There is much more to a person than can be taken in at a single glance, and, as is generally the case, "what you see is *not* what you get".

How much more powerful than making a good 'first impression' is the satisfaction of shattering people's preconceived notions about you, of literally being reborn in their eyes as a novelty, a bright and shining unknown. The dawning awareness, the dazed bewilderment of their awakening as they realize they had not really known you at all... and that they *need* you to enrich their all too ordinary lives, this more than makes up for being ignored and passed over at first sight.





"...a woman could fool herself about her relationship with a man only as long as he was around. The moment he had left, she would drop all pretense, and no wonder; at that moment her heart would break and that awful, awful sickness begin: the agony, the hopeless yearning with every fiber of her body, every nerve, for his presence, his touch; her every waking thought, her every dream would be centered on him in unbearable, self-inflicted torture."

-- Jan de Hartog, *The Peaceable Kingdom*

She pursues you relentlessly. The woman *will not* let you alone. She embarrasses you in public places by inappropriate displays of affection. She calls at inopportune times and turns up at your door without warning. She interrupts your work and intrudes into your private business. Her professed "love" for you complicates your life. Your devoted admirer has become an annoyance, a damned nuisance, a scourge.

Having a woman completely enthralled by you, *obsessed* with you, totally and entirely "in your power" is the stuff of fantasy, adolescent fantasy to be exact. Certainly, having a woman "hanging all over you" might be flattering to your ego, but, for all that, it is an unhealthy state of affairs, a dubious way to run a relationship, a highly mixed blessing. It demeans the woman, distracts you from attending to your life's work, and drains your energy. It could well bring ruin upon the woman . . . and upon the object of her affections, you.

What compels a woman to become smitten and enamored, entranced, obsessed, obsessed with a man, one particular man? How can a passion for one special person brutally enslave her heart and mind, giving her no rest, no peace? Why does she believe, without reservation, that only this one man, distant, unobtainable, holds the promise of fulfillment for her?

The obsessed woman wants the unobtainable, precisely that which she cannot have, the man who is beyond her grasp. She might fixate upon a man already married or in an established relationship, or on one totally unsuitable for reasons of age difference or other cultural barriers. Inaccessibility and resistance superheat her passion past all reasonable bounds. This is the notorious "Romeo and Juliette" effect, familiar to generations of frustrated lovers.

The obsessed woman falls in love with an "ideal", a picture in her mind, not a real person, and she develops the conviction, nurtures the illusion that this man is her one and only possible soulmate. If the man fails to respond, if he denies her... even this enhances and intensifies his "specialness", his aura of mystery and desirability. She is lost.

The obsessed woman has gaps, missing parts in her life. She is unfulfilled, incomplete, unfinished. She is driven to fill the emptiness, the void within her. Her frantic pursuit of a man is an anguished cry of desolation, an expression of the search for purpose and meaning in life that at some level must move all humans.

The subject of mad, obsessive love has received extensive attention in literature and the arts. For further reference, consider Tolstoy's novel, *Anna Karenina*, not to mention the movies *The Touch* (Bergman), *Play Misty*, and, of course, *Fatal Attraction*.



# The Knack

## What is it?

A select few men seem to hold a fatal fascination for women. While these fellows are not, as a rule, particularly attractive in a physical sense, nor even necessarily unusually masculine and "sexy", all the same, whatever they are, or do, or have, it sets them dramatically apart from the ordinary run of male humanity. What special qualities distinguish these singular men and grants them the adoration of the female sex? Can there be any doubt that there exists a special gift, a peculiar talent, a *knack* for attracting women?

The knack reveals itself in its unintended consequences, in the traces and scars it leaves upon the life of every human it touches. This dark force has multiple faces, as many as there are variations on the theme of influencing people, of bending them, of enlisting them in a cause, of "converting" them, of recruiting them into a cult, of molding them into a mass movement, of bypassing reason and acting directly on the smoldering fires of the primal urges. Prophets and founders of religions have the knack, as do successful politicians... and insurance salesmen. Attracting women is but one manifestation of this power, and a trivial one at that. In other times and places, this peculiar talent been named "charisma", animal magnetism, charm, or just plain personal force. It exists, and it has exerted a profound and oftentimes disruptive influence throughout history.

What is the source of this strange gift, and why is it so rare? The conventional materialistic world view fails to acknowledge its existence, much less explore its nature. The mystical explanation remains the only plausible attempt to grapple with this phenomenon, this wild card in the affairs of our fellow humans.

Somewhere, beyond the reach of our senses, there exists a vast reservoir of raw energy, of force, of potential, of *might be* that can be tapped by anyone. Here, in the realm of the human spirit, it is faith, belief in the impossible, refusal to give up, indomitable fortitude that define the shadowy landmarks of this unknown continent. It is universally accessible... to those who find the hidden doorway. The key is a process of insight and revelation that is all too often the result of suffering, privation, intense pain on a very personal level. Conditions of extreme stress can suspend even the laws of nature and open the channel to experiences that transform our perception of the world, let us see the unseen, and grasp the very forces that bind the Web of Life.

The universe, they said, depended for its operation on the balance of four forces which they identified as charm, persuasion, uncertainty and bloody-mindedness.

--Terry Pratchett

Dale Carnegie, the grand old man of the self-improvement industry, found it possible to make a very good living writing books and producing expensive courses purporting to teach *the knack*, those skills needed to "make friends and influence people". Many have followed in his footsteps, dressing up his message with a veneer of high tech and/or New Age flimflam.

Of late, it seems that every mercenary psychologist, spiritual advisor, and comfort peddler hopes to make a fast buck conducting seminars or writing best-sellers allegedly teaching the knack. What is purveyed is a dumbed-down mass-market version of low-grade mind control and brainwashing techniques. This is nothing very mysterious or esoteric, it is just simple communications skills intensified, with a slant toward manipulating people. Get the subject's attention, press her "hot buttons", subtly torque her emotions, subvert her perceptions, work her weaknesses. Use subliminal suggestion, and artfully slip in "hidden persuaders" as you ply her with intoxicating, hypnotic words. Give her a little nudge, and if she resists - back off, then subtly push her forward again, and again down the slippery seductive slope, as the opportunity presents itself... somewhat like playing a fish, to set the hook. \*

This effective, if somewhat crude methodology has been around for millennia. What was once known as proselytizing and ordinary salesmanship has been repackaged into "speed seduction", various high-pressure seminar-based training regimens, and an alphabet soup of other programs for behavioral control.

\* If these techniques have a common thread, it is betrayal of trust.

## Why?

The average person has a number of things in her personal history that she is deeply ashamed of, whether justifiably or not. These generally fall in the categories of sexual conduct, secret desires, petty larceny, lying, or having been the target of humiliation. The specifics do not matter - what counts is that **everyone has something to hide**. **Predators are very well aware of this, and they know that each of us suffers from guilt**, and has emotional levers to trigger, "buttons" to press. Finding the right ones is just a matter of technique.

## How?

The question remains, whether you, as a shy man, can develop your own powers of attracting women, your own particular personalized version of *the knack*. It is a matter of attuning yourself to the burning flame within you, of recognizing your own specialness, your uniqueness as a human being. This reaches far beyond issues of confidence and self-esteem, it touches upon your ultimate faith in yourself as a part of the Grand Design. You must affirm your belief that you are capable of forming stable relationships with women, and that this is a crucial element in your life's work. Finally, it comes down to translating purpose and intention into action, of getting to the point that your everyday interactions with women mirror your inner feelings toward them...

**If you like women, enjoy their company, and know how to express it in a tactful, understated manner, they will respond. Listen to the women in your life, be sympathetic, give them emotional support, and you will be amply repaid. You will develop a talent for attracting the women who need what you have to offer - your own unique self, encompassing all of you, your strengths as well as your weaknesses, your luminous humanity as well as your warts. This is *your* "knack".**





## The Romantic Predator

The Don Juan motif has fascinated artists and thinkers for centuries. As far back as the 17th Century, Tirso de Molina created the archetype of the hero as proto-trickster, promiscuous manipulator, sublime lecher. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is an elaboration on the theme, an opera that overwhelms the senses with the sheer vitality of an entity who can only be described as a raw force of nature. Moliere and Lord Byron, among others, bring him to life. Bernard Shaw, in an interlude in his play, *Man and Superman*, consigns him to an honorable place in Hell. In the modern era, cartoonist Jules Pfeiffer wrote the successful play, *Harry, The Rat With Women*, depicting the sad/funny shenanigans of an otherwise ordinary guy using women for recreational sex. The film *Alfie*, dating from the same period, enumerates the many "conquests" of a Cockney truck driver. The seducer remains the hero of song and saga, at least of the pop culture media.

The sexual predator, that dark and mysterious figure, the "stranger", unpredictable, hinting at danger, tinged with violence... what is there that so attracts women to him? Truly, there seems something almost magical about those few men who seem able to mesmerize women at will. What secret do they possess that gives them this power, this intensity, this animal magnetism?

Users and manipulators is the key phrase. Such men have learned to spot and sniff out vulnerable women, the "wounded birds", the ones most susceptible to their particular brand of sorcery. They have mastered the art of "pushing the emotional buttons" of their fellow humans, exploiting the feelings and weaknesses of hurt people (and is not most everyone hurt?), playing women like a musical instrument. In their single-minded pursuit of pleasure, of self-gratification, they leave behind them a string of victims. These are haters of women, exploiters of human weakness, parasites, *sociopaths*\*.

These . . . fancy-grade hit-and-run drivers leave numerous victims in their wake . . .

Roger Shattuck, *Forbidden Knowledge*

This little deviation into the dark alleys of the criminal mind and the underside of human nature yields insight into the sad emptiness of the career seducer. There is little to envy in these creatures. They lead meaningless lives, and each successive "conquest" does nothing to fill the screaming, hungry void within. There is little to admire, considering the pain and wreckage they leave behind. We shy men can pride ourselves in being truly different, in being perceptive, sensitive, caring human beings, in being lovers of women. We are the ones who clean up the damage left behind by the monsters and the misbegotten. We bring beauty and healing into the world.

What a chimera, then, is man! What a novelty, what a monster,  
what a chaos, what a subject of contradiction, what a prodigy! A  
judge of all things, feeble worm of the earth, depositary of the  
truth, cloaca of uncertainty and error, the glory and the shame  
of the universe.

Blaise Pascal: Thoughts, chap. x.

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\* See Dr. Robert Hare's book, *Without Conscience* (Pocket Books, 1993, ISBN 0-671-73261-7), for further reading on this topic.



## Aggressiveness

Behold the man, the **man of action**, the ruthless hero of myth and saga, society's darling. Here is this rugged doer of deeds, the rough-and-ready "go getter", the one who grabs what he wants without pausing to think... the aggressive stranger, the cowboy, the soldier, the gangster. Contemptuously, he shoves past that quiet guy in the corner, the shy one, the one ridiculed by family and friends as a "wimp", a "mouse", a victim, as perhaps something less than a man.

According to the latest sociological dogma, females are genetically *wired* to be attracted to "alpha" males, those who are most assertive and aggressive. This seems all too true of some women. Aggressive men *seem* to get women, to attract women, many women, because of their semblance of strength, the swagger of the domineering male. Yet, what type of women are these? Fragile, unsure of themselves, swayed by instinct, sleepwalking their way through life, running on autopilot . . .

Only a nuance, a subtle shade of difference separates *aggressiveness* from its less respectable cousin, *aggression*, the use of force to gain one's ends. With this in mind, understand aggressiveness as a sign of immaturity, of fear . . . of weakness, of blind stupidity. It is the crudest mode of social interaction, the blunt instrument, the bludgeon. It is the "bull in a china shop" syndrome, a behavior pattern that gets its practitioners typed as boors, thugs, and worse. There is an immediacy about them, a brutal spontaneity, for they recognize no tomorrow. Unfeeling, unbridled, unburdened by remorse, they loot, despoil, and ruin. Behind them, they leave poisoned relationships, broken trust, betrayal, and despair.

Things are not as they seem, skim milk masquerading as cream.

Shakespeare



# The Beautiful People

A digression about the "Studio 54" phenomenon

Back in the '70's, when *disco* was still king, thousands would stand in line and wait hours for admittance to the "hot" nightclubs, of which *Studio 54* was the best known exemplar. Of those waiting, only a select few gained admission, chosen in a somewhat arbitrary procedure, according to whether their appearance and clothing tickled the fancy of the doorman and/or bouncer of the club (celebs and privileged regulars entered ahead of the commoners, of course).

After several years of this, it finally began to dawn on the rejectees, that "many are called, but few are chosen", that they would forever be considered unwelcome intruders, that (duhh...) they were being played for suckers. The long lines shrank, and the disco craze imploded.

So is it also with the *beautiful people* subculture. When an entourage of sycophants and toadies no longer pays homage, when outsiders no longer clamor for admittance to this select circle, when it inevitably becomes "uncool" to belong, then too will this phenomenon become yet another unimportant footnote in the history of mass delusion.



## Older Women Make Better Lovers, Don't They?

🇺🇸 An older woman will never wake you up in the middle of the night and ask you, "What are you thinking?" An older woman doesn't care what you think.

🇺🇸 An older woman is a cheaper date. A younger woman will cost you 12 beers, but an older woman will sleep with you after a cup of herbal tea.

🇺🇸 An older woman can wear bright red lipstick during the day without looking like she just had an adventure inside a jam jar.

🇺🇸 Older women can run faster because they're always wearing sensible shoes.

🇺🇸 An older woman is almost always already attached to someone, so there's no need to develop a phobia about committing to her. The last thing she needs in her life is another clingy, whiny, dependent man.

🇺🇸 Older women are more honest. An older woman will tell you that you are a jerk if you're acting like one. A young woman will say nothing, fearing you might get mad and break up with her.

🇺🇸 An older woman always carries a condom in her purse. A younger woman is still hoping the guy might have one on him.

🇺🇸 An older woman will never get pregnant, then suddenly demand that the two of you get married. In fact, if you impregnate an older woman, you will probably be the last to know.

🇺🇸 Older women have jobs with dental plans. Younger women can't help you when your teeth get knocked out playing hockey.

🇺🇸 Older women take charge of the situation. An older woman will call you up and ask you for a date. A younger woman will wait forever by the phone for you to call.

🇺🇸 An older woman will agree to go to McDonald's with you for a meal. Younger women are too nervous to eat anything in front of somebody whom they might boff later.

🇺🇸 Older women know how to cook. Young women know how to dial Pizza Hut take out.

🇺🇸 Older women are psychic. You never have to confess to having an affair, because somehow they always know.

🇺🇸 Older women often own an interesting collection of lingerie that they have acquired from admirers over the years. Young women often don't wear underpants at all, thus practically eliminating all possibility of a striptease.

🇺🇸 Older women know what Kegel exercises are.

🇺🇸 Older women are dignified. They are beyond having a screaming match with you in the middle of the night in a public park.

🇺🇸 Older women are experienced. They understand that sometimes, after 12 beers, a guy just can't get it up. A younger woman may need some time to grasp this fact.

👤 An older woman will introduce you to all of her girlfriends. A younger woman will avoid her girlfriends when she's with you, in case you get any ideas...

👤 An older woman has lots of girlfriends ... and most of them will want to screw you too.

👤 An older woman will always meet the minimum height requirement to go on an amusement ride.

👤 An older woman will never accuse you of stealing the best years of her youth because chances are someone else has stolen them first.

👤 An older woman will never accuse you of using her. She's using you.

"Folk Lore"  
(unattributed)

This collection of apocryphal popular "wisdom" does not necessarily bear any connection to real persons or real life. Age can bring experience and the insight that comes with it... but don't count on it. Older women can be just as capricious, foolish, even as cruel as many of their younger sisters. And yet...

**And just what's wrong with younger women? Women in the 18 - 25 age group represent the sexy and romantic ideal, the pinnacle of life. Don't they? Don't they?**

**As it happens, most women don't really emotionally mature until they are well into their 30's. (The same holds true for most men too, of course.) The typical young woman, for all her pseudo-sophistication, is only a few years removed from the playing-with-Barbie-dolls and giggling-with-friends stage. And her behavior in a relationship will reflect this.**

**With relationships, as in your career, you run into the vicious *experience trap*. In order to get experience you need experience. Here, though, there is a convenient escape. An older woman makes a good "entry-level" girlfriend. She will teach you what you need to know, patient and aware that your freshness and enthusiasm outweigh lack of skill. Cherish her, for if she is the right one, you will fit together well, your lives will interlock so intimately that age difference will matter little. It may turn out to be the relationship of a lifetime, your lifetime.**



## Just Friends?

Our culture disparages non-romantic relationships between men and women. Befriending a woman for reasons other than wanting to become intimately involved seems a dead giveaway that there is something profoundly wrong with you. Still, that is hardly sufficient cause to pass up what can be a genuinely transformative experience, an adventure in friendship that could go far beyond what is available in prosaic "male bonding" with your buddies.

### The rewards of being "just friends"

- There is a special kind of warmth and closeness in a friendly man-woman relationship, even lacking physical intimacy.
- You can express feelings to a woman that you would be uncomfortable acknowledging to another man. You can cry on her shoulder, get sympathy, comfort, and advice - even a bit of mothering should you need it. It's nice having an understanding friend with whom you can let go and just be yourself.
- The very lack of tension, of not having anything to prove, lets the relationship remain at a high comfort level. The friendship will be stable and enduring, outlasting many of your lovers and girlfriends. (Former lovers sometimes make the best of friends.)
- You can learn quite a bit about women and how to relate to them in a calm, relaxing, pressure-free setting. A non-romantic friendship is a good "starter" relationship for those lacking experience with the more intense kind, somewhat like "training wheels" to build up your confidence.
- Your non-romantic friend can be invaluable in helping you to "network" and find available women among her acquaintances for your next romantic relationship.



# "What do you do?"

Should you be on the receiving end of this unfortunate question, you have a number of clever retorts to choose from, being careful not to unduly offend the woman you are speaking to.

- "I'm an ologist."
- "I'm a misanthrope."
- "I'm an unemployed Employment Counselor."
- "I'm Chargé d'Affairs for the Austro-Hungarian Empire."
- "I'm the pretender to the throne."
- "I'm a sorcerer's apprentice."
- "I'm an Assistant to the Undersecretary."
- "I'm an avatar."
- "I'm the reincarnation of Albertus Magnus."
- "I'm co-author of the book,  
*1001 Creative Ways to Spend Your Welfare Check.*"
- "I'm an inferior decorator."
- "I'm a direct descendant from Adam."
- "I'm the chauffeur's favorite nephew."
- "I'm accepting donations."
- "I'm The One And Only."
- "I'm writing a book on how to answer impertinent questions."

Your conversation partner might well be at a loss for words, but do hasten to assure her that no offense was intended, and it's all in jest. [Lessons in good manners are best administered in a lighthearted and painless fashion.]

## **What do you do?**

**I try my hardest to be a good and decent human being,  
not always an easy task amidst an epidemic of rudeness.**

Note that if you are speaking with a woman as socially inexperienced as you, she may unintentionally let slip the baleful "*What do you do?*" question. This does not necessarily imply bad manners on her part, and there may be mitigating circumstances. Exercise restraint and *be kind*. This most certainly takes precedence over flaunting your devastating wit.

**"When the Messiah comes, he will heal the sick and raise the dead... but for the fool there is no cure."**

old Jewish proverb





## The Pickup Line

The so-called pickup line is a desperation measure, a clumsy attempt to short-circuit the normal acquaintanceship process. With a dismal probability of success, it's your basic exercise in futility.

**"If you were a cookie, I wouldn't leave a crumb."**

Pathetic, embarrassing to the speaker and offensive to the recipient, elevating to new heights the art making a fool of yourself.

Consider one of the more endearing lines:

**"Do you have a quarter?"**

**"Why?"**

**"My mother told me to call her when I met the woman of my dreams."**

This one deserves at least a giggle, perhaps even a *"nice try, but..."*. Oh, well.

**"On August 17th, 1556, Nostradamus predicted that we would meet at this very time and place. How does it feel to fulfill a prophecy?"**

Too contrived. Gets a shrug, at best.

**"Do you believe in love at first sight... or should I walk past you again?"**

Snickers of disbelief.

**"All those dangerous curves, and me with no brakes."**

Gimme a brake, er- break.

If using a pickup line is vastly overrated for the self-confident, socially adept male, it is virtually useless for the shy guy.

**"Foxy lady, I've been too busy drooling over you to remember that I'm normally tongue tied in the presence of beautiful women. Allow me to force my presence upon you so I won't be overwhelmed by the loneliness and despair that afflict me."**

This is the pickup line reduced to its bare essentials, touching in its honesty and depth of feeling, sure to rate at least a "superior" on the derision scale, and even so, more amusing than 90% of the lines in common usage.

Anxiety and fear strangle the magic flow of words, the give-and-take between two persons newly discovering each other. All the same, better to risk nervous silence than to subvert and contaminate the dance by practiced glibness, by carefully rehearsed phrases designed to manipulate and seduce. Most intelligent women prefer the company of a sweating, stuttering *real person* to that of a sleazeball.

**"Madam, I'm Adam."**

Thus did the first man purportedly introduce himself to his intended. Eve, no doubt enchanted that this line was a palindrome in the not yet invented English language, could not have helped being impressed by its cleverness. The rest, as they say, is history. Even if not endowed with a name that so lends itself to wordplay, you may nevertheless employ some variation of the plain-and-simple introduction.

**"Hi ho, I'm Joe"** gets more points than **"We were lovers in a past life"**. You might even live a little

dangerously and try **"You are a strikingly beautiful woman, and I would like to get to know you."** Other creative self-intros include **"I'm sure we've never met before"** and **"There is something magical about first encounters."** Spontaneity outclasses cliché and honesty trumps phoniness every time.

Being resourceful and quick on your feet is essential, and a ready sense of humor guides you past the rough spots. Most of all, the heady feeling of just being able to talk to women, at ease and enjoying yourself, builds your self-confidence and people skills to the point that you become a sought-after conversation partner.

## Exercises

You have just started to dig into your mashed potatoes at your usual table in the company cafeteria when a woman you don't recognize sits down in the vacant seat across from you. It's just the two of you at the table. She gives a shy little smile, then begins to unwrap a sandwich. How do you kickstart a conversation?

- "The carrot cake is good today. You ought to try it."
- "Mystery meat again. I should have brownbagged it."
- Wait for her to finish eating, then offer her your yogurt.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
(Fill in the blanks.)
- \_\_\_\_\_  
(Be really creative.)

At your cousin's Christmas party, you see a woman across the room entertaining a crowd of admirers. You get this sudden crazy urge to talk to her right now, immediately, no matter if you make a complete fool of yourself in the attempt. All right, think of it as a courage test, a "proof of concept", a kamikaze run, a way of winning a little bet with yourself ("You wouldn't dare..."). Start walking toward her. Don't rehearse any lines. It has to be totally spontaneous. Now you're near her, and she looks up, startled, and notices you. You say...

- "Please permit me one small indulgence. I make a habit of approaching women I've never met as part of my shyness cure. Just one little smile, just one, please, otherwise I'll melt away with fright or dissolve in tears, either way equally distressing. Spare me with your mercy, or slay me with your scorn."

- "Allow me, fair lady, to rescue you from the crowd of your admirers. Let them admire you from afar as I charm you with my dazzling wit and you dazzle me with your charming... charms."

- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds.  
A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing.  
Clive James



## Eye Contact

Television has proved that people will look at anything rather than each other.

Ann Landers

Do shivers of terror run down your spine at the prospect of facing the woman you are fated to love *eye to eye*? Does panic seize your mind when you picture yourself standing transfixed in her gaze, naked in all your shyness and anxiety, trembling and paralyzed? Swallow your fear. Think of the rewards of unveiling a new world, a jewel of creation, the realm of your darling... for is she not, like each of us, the very center and shaper of her own universe? If the eyes are windows on the soul, and they are, then is not losing yourself in the eyes of your beloved the most intimate of touching?

He who looks outward sleeps, he who looks inward wakes.

Jung

Awaken in self-knowledge, for only then can you meet the eyes of another, accept her as an equal, recognize a fellow human walking a destined path. Look at the woman, caress her with your regard, with appreciation for her *self*, for what she is. Your intent is pure, and this is a reaching across, a subtle almost-touch, a sharing, a joining. The joining of the eyes begins in almost accidental glances, intermittent, the shy but knowing smiles - an almost hesitant conversation in glimpses that recapitulates the ancient children's ritual of peek-a-boo, yet more intensely... and finally, finally (perhaps), comes that painfully delicious moment of recognition when everything snaps into sharp focus.

A warm look can hold the promise of a kiss, and more, much more. But, beware! Crude and untimely gawking may crush and bruise the delicate flower of a woman's private self. An intrusive stare, the "fish eye", peering, probing, clumsy goggling... all these stink of an aggressive, blundering fool. Mark well that sensitivity and a delicate touch are as requisite in this endeavor as in any other involving personal relationships. Mastery of the gentle art of *look-touching* is one of the keys to the cage of aloneness.

Your eyes will twinkle, return smile for smile, warmth for warmth, to the woman whose regard you have captured. Words lie, facial expressions deceive, but the language of the eyes does not lend itself to falsehood. The eyes speak mutely, but they speak truly.



## Banter

Banter consists of two essential elements, spontaneity and rhythm. It demands rapid response, saying the first thing that pops into your head, stringing phrases together in ways that may violate the canons of syntax, but impact the senses and plug gaping holes in the conversational space.

starbursts of verbal fireworks  
shimmering waterfalls of mind music  
cascading crescendos of glorious witticisms  
words! words! words! words!

It is the dance of words in arcane ceremonies, a drumbeat of nonsequiturs flaunting their unbridled passion. It is flirtatious chit-chat, semi-poetic flim-flam, unpolished and flamboyant give-and-take. It is a raging torrent of words, staccato, yet still somehow coherent. It demands daring, brashness - and yet in no small measure, finesse and a sensitive ear. It is a nicety far above the skill threshold of most shy people.

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How can a shy person get from here to there, from numb, panicky silence to the point of comfortably being able to joke, laugh, and, yes, banter with a woman? How do you develop the talent to reach inside yourself and pull out just the right phrase, the one that resonates, that rattles the windows, that makes the listeners "ooh and ah", the inspiration, the wild card, the slamdunk? It's simply a matter of finding that quiet spot in your mind, the place of refuge, the fortress from which you can sally out and do battle at word slinging.

Comfort level and confidence make the difference. It's not all that difficult to banter with a friend, with someone you're not emotionally involved with, or, for that matter, with a total stranger. When you're face-to-face with a woman you'd like to know better - tension, nervousness, and the terrible need to "perform" spoil the game.

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Begin by upgrading conversational skills. Keep a notebook of funny one-liners, retorts, and gambits

**"Don Quixote at your service. Would you kindly direct me to the nearest windmill?"**

Be creative . . . quips you make up yourself are better than ones you hear or read. Practice your delivery, in your own particular style and cadence (not necessarily imitating any particular well-known performer) until it becomes virtually automatic. Have a friend or family member "volunteer" to play the role of your conversation partner and drill at pulling returns, retorts and quips out of thin air, and in "real time".

Read novels and construct imaginary scenarios, with dialogs between the male and female characters. Imagine what they would say to one another in conversation, in flirtatious bantering. Rewrite the story in your mind, putting yourself in the place of the male lead. What would *you* say?

Wordplay and punning make up the raw material of witty retorts. Playing with language is the essence of humor. Push the envelope of absurdity. Mangle that folk wisdom. Destroy preconceptions. Set common sense on its head. Your audience will laugh and groan, but they will love you for it.

A day without orange juice is like a day without orange juice.

Admiration: polite recognition of another's resemblance to you.

After all is said and done, a lot more is said than done.

Let's not complicate our relationship by trying to communicate with each other.

Will reality please raise its hand?

Q: What do you think of the Royal Family?

A: I like Prince Wenceslaus. He'll make a *good king*.

Practice and rehearsal in the theater of the imagination... all this is a crutch. Before you can walk under your own power in the arena of raillery, you will need a crutch, training wheels, an amulet, a lucky charm. This is a nifty bit of gimmickry, a small magic to unlock your talent and power. After that, who knows what hidden depths you will uncover within yourself . . .

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## Doing it, finally

Let the context determine the script. A woman making a hostile approach calls for an entirely different handling mode than one who is friendly and *interested* in you. In either case, a *smile* serves as a bridge toward the interaction that will follow.

Ideally, you are well matched with a conversation partner, and the encounter unrolls as smoothly as a choreographed comedy routine. You feed each other lines, and bounce witticisms off each other. It's entertaining and productive for the both of you.

He: "Well met by moonlight."

She: "'Tis not midsummer, nor doth the moon grace the heavens, nor this a dream."

(Good. She knows her Shakespeare.)

He: "In thy presence, doth not the lilac bloom, the darkest night glow as if moonlit? Melt into my arms soonest, beloved, ere I revert to latter day Anglic, the speech of varlets.

She: "Neither the time nor the place for melting is this. Nevertheless, I appreciate your wit, and you, to wit, you twit."

Repartee as verbal self-defense presses verbal fencing skills to the limit. This calls for detachment, stepping out of your skin, playing of a role, playacting in the truest sense. Picture yourself just "kidding around" with your kid sister, rather than in a knuckle chewing confrontation with a desirable, but hostile woman. It's a rehearsal, "fun 'n games", tomfoolery (you have nothing to lose).

She: "Lookee here, it's the neighborhood nerd. Why, hello, Mr. Geek."

(The *ultimate*. Why couldn't she accuse you of something a little less gross, like sleeping under bridges and sipping cheap wine from a paper bag?)

**He:** "*Sir Geek* to you, princess. Your beauty lights up the night sky (even as your lack of wit darkens it). May I present my most humble self, a true paragon among geeks, the vaunted virtuoso of vapid vainglorious vaudeville, knight of the Holy Order of Pocket Protectors, the very noblest of the nerds?"

[ironic bow]

**She:** (speechless)

**He:** Speechless?



# Reading People

The first time, the very first time you meet her is a dizzying headlong plunge into the dark unknown, with your eyes clenched tightly shut and hardly daring to breathe. *Can this really be happening? Is it the beginning of a meaningful relationship, something that will change the course of my life? Or am I wasting my time with a woman totally unsuited for me? Is this a catastrophic blunder, something that could turn into a nightmare? How can I know? How can I possibly be sure?*

There allegedly exist techniques for "reading" people, for getting a "quick take" on them within the first few minutes of an initial encounter. Likewise, some claim to have a special talent for instantly assessing the persons they meet. This might be something of an exaggeration, but at the bottom of it there lies a nugget of truth.

Taxi drivers, waitresses, salesmen - those who, in the course of their work constantly come into contact with the "unwashed masses", by necessity develop the skills for sizing up people at a glance. It might indeed be a wise investment of time to take a temporary or part-time job that would put you in the situation of having to deal with people face-to-face. Note, in passing, that the formal study of psychology fails to deliver on its promises - it provides precious little insight into personality types and motivations, and yields virtually nothing of any practical value for dealing with people in real life.

You must be comfortable enough in a social setting to take a step back, to detach yourself emotionally, to function as an uninvolved, objective observer. Look past superficial physical appearance, disregard visceral reactions to a pretty face and provocative curves. Critically important is careful fact gathering and analysis, and this means **ice-cold clarity of thought and steely objectivity**. Observe the facial expressions and body language, particularly the posture and muscle tension, the set of the mouth, and the eyes, the windows of the soul. Sense the movements and changes in the lines of the face and its features, particularly the forehead, the eyebrows, and the lips. Read the *signals*, tune in on the subtle nonverbal cues. From there, proceed to listening to and interpreting what the woman says and how she says it, her tone of voice and gestures. Listen as well to your own experience and that exquisitely sensitive intuitive judgment of people that you have so carefully nurtured. Develop an empathy for the woman and let it deepen to the point where it becomes mimesis, where you share her feelings and tune in to her intentions. Blur the barriers between you.

There are two basic techniques for figuring out "what people are about". The *active* or invasive method involves deliberately probing and provoking people to get a reaction, or more subtly, just giving 'cues', and seeing how they respond. Simply asking questions works, too, though this must be done with a degree of finesse. Then, there is the *passive* method, which uses awareness and focused attention (social sonar), rather than more intrusive techniques of "reading" people. Sharp-eyed observation, gathering impressions, and using logic, judgment, and intuition may be sufficient in many cases to do a "quick-and-dirty" person analysis, or even more... Just as a skilled artist can seemingly capture the essence of a person in a glance and preserve it in a pencil sketch, so can you cultivate a similar artistic sensibility.



Upon meeting a person, immediately take a snapshot of her, a fuzzy first approximation. As you



become better acquainted, fine tune that judgment into a second approximation, a somewhat more accurate overview, as the picture gradually comes into sharper focus. This could further evolve into an elaborate structure, a multicolored mosaic representing your experiences with her, as you slowly assemble the missing clues to what she is about, one small piece at a time. As your relationship unfolds, you can explore the deeper, more subtle aspects of her personality, and get to know her quite well indeed.

## Constellations of character traits

{Some arbitrary categories into which humans tend to be classified}

Dishonesty / faithlessness <-----> Integrity / trustworthiness

Foolishness <-----> Intelligence / good sense

Fearfulness <-----> Boldness

(caution, conventionality ..... willingness to take risks)

Cold-bloodedness <-----> Passion

Indifference <-----> Expressiveness / warmth

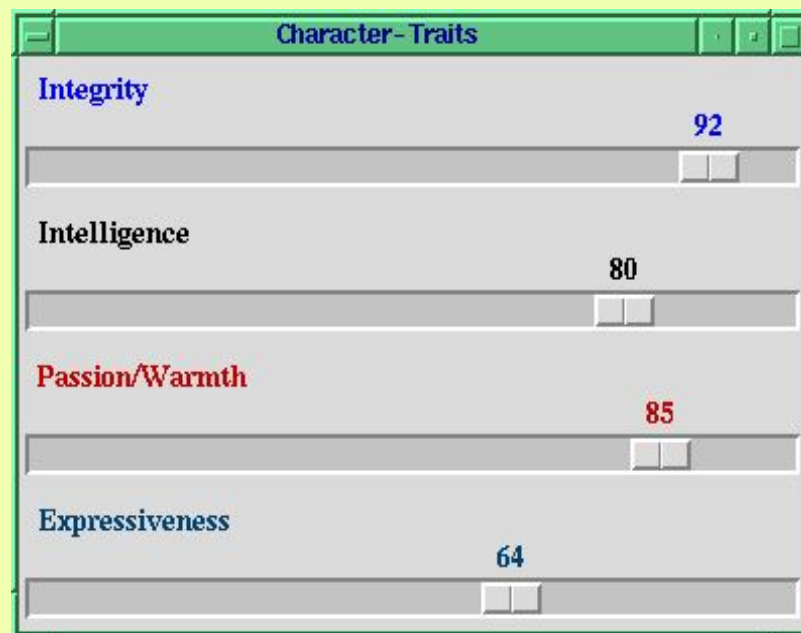
Selfishness <-----> Generosity

Hedonistic / pleasure oriented <-----> Hard-working

Passive <-----> Active

"Weak" <-----> "Strong"

Define your own categories, as appropriate to your requirements, and to the particular situation.



A simulated composite rendering of some selected character traits.

Combining discrete character traits into an overall profile of a personality structure is an art form in itself, something that psychological professionals attempt and consistently fail at. Personalities do not readily fall into neat pigeonholes, nor do they fit standard templates, and the complexity of human behavior defeats all efforts to explain or categorize it. It is likewise impossible to accurately measure, analyze, or even fathom a human being, and "reading" people is at best only a very crude modeling tool for getting a "quick take" on someone you have just met. Use this technique with extreme caution, and a healthy dose of skepticism, because, as the saying goes, "your mileage may vary".

**All models are wrong. Some models are useful.**

George Box

A woman, meeting you for the first time, has an *agenda*. It may be a relatively benign one - looking for someone nice to talk to, seeking companionship, even love (someone to fill the empty space in her heart). Less commonly, she might have more sinister motives - looking for someone to exploit or to take out her anger on. In any case, she would certainly be interested in *your* agenda, in your intentions and desires. The marvelously intricate process of exchanging tidbits of personal information, of feeding one another snippets of feelings and patchwork fragments of experience - this is what can make a first meeting so rewarding.



## Why, Oh Why Would a Woman Respond to a Personal Ad?

- The ad intrigues her. She wants to find out more about this person whose words touch her so intimately. Those words! They bring a bloom to her cheeks, make her blood fizz, and set her off daydreaming, thinking secret thoughts.
- The ad speaks to her, personally.  
"Hey, this is me! He's looking for me!"
- The ad illuminates an overcast winter day, makes her laugh, fall silent, then dissolve in tears.
- The ad presents just the type of fellow she would seriously consider for a long-term relationship as a lover, a mate, a friend.
- The ad comes into her life at exactly the right time, just when she's looking for someone like you. Fortune smiles.
- For no particular reason she can put a name to. It just feels right.



## Using Your Web Site as a Personal Ad

In grainy black-and-white Depression era newsreels, disheveled and unshaven men parade wearily up and down the sidewalks in the business district wearing "sandwich board" signs, literally becoming human billboards. Paid a starvation wage to make a spectacle of themselves, they publicized and drew attention to a local store or restaurant. The modern equivalent of this bizarre mode of advertising is the personal Web site.

Your home page permits virtually unlimited scope in presenting yourself to "eligible" women. Think of it as a billboard or gigantic display ad. In contrast to a conventional personal ad, you can describe yourself at length and in exquisite, even maddening detail, not subject to content or stylistic guidelines (nor even to the dictates of good taste, necessarily). Pictures and graphics can add emphasis to your words, and they cost nothing extra. This is a forum for your creativity... and a test of your ability to exercise restraint (just because you have enough rope to hang yourself doesn't necessarily mean you should feel compelled to do so).

Tell about yourself, your life, your achievements, your family history, your interests, your beliefs, your hopes and dreams, your eccentricities, your weird habits, and what sets you apart from the common run of humanity. Women would rather read your life story than your resumé. You are trying to attract a mate, not an employer.

Your site will be most effective if it is of *general interest*, especially to the target audience, single women. Embellish your page with discussions of social issues, essays on "why there are no good men left", short fiction about unhappy love affairs, True Confessions, False Confessions, recipes, consumer topics, and articles you have written on health and nutrition issues. Showcase your talents, not your ego.

As is generally the case, a touch of humor sprinkles **magic pixie dust** on creative endeavor. A candid photo of yourself just after that pot of lasagna spilled on your head, or when you fell into your neighbor's irrigation ditch can't help but appeal to the mothering instinct of the women seeing it. Nothing beats a picture of your six-month-old self lying naked, bottom up, on a bearskin rug for sheer cloying cuteness. If all else fails, take that boring photo of yourself standing there on that used car lot with a silly smile plastered on your face and scan it upside down. It will embed itself in the minds of those who see it like a termite infestation.

Make your page readable. You can't go wrong with a bold font on a light background. Don't overdo the pictures and graphics. No one wants to wait 15 minutes for a page to load, only to find something just slightly less garish than a supermarket flyer. Go for elegance and simplicity, as it creates a favorable impression, not to mention making you look good.

Few people will stumble upon your site by accident, and a systematic effort to announce it will save your page from the lamentable fate of parading wearily up and down the sidewalks of the Web with no one noticing. For a start, consider placing it in the [Singles Online WebRing](#). Submit the page to at least a few of the more important Web search engines. Put the URL in the signature line of your e-mail and newsgroup posts. Be sure to reference it in any personal ads you place. Wear a custom-designed tee shirt advertising your site. Print up and distribute flyers announcing it. Put it on your business card. Send out press releases. Trumpet yourself to the world, and let your site be your trumpet.



## What Those "Code Words" in Personal Ads Really Mean

EUPHEMISM	TRANSLATION
40ish	52 and looking for 25-year old
Affectionate	Needy, and looking for mother figure
Aging child	Self-centered adult
Ambitious	Ruthlessly exploits people
Appreciates quality	But expects someone else to pay for it
Artist	Unreliable
Athletic	Sits on the couch and watches ESPN
Beautiful	Spends a lot of time in front of mirrors
Disease-free	Up to date on mumps vaccinations
Down to earth	Petty and vindictive
Educated	Will always treat you like an idiot
Elegant	Dripping with costume jewelry
Employed	Part-time job stuffing envelopes at home
Enjoy life's pleasures	Overindulged, spoiled brat
Enjoy long walks	Car has been repossessed
Enjoy moonlit nights	Can't pay the electric bill
Excited about life's journey	No concept of reality
Expressive	Being sued for libel
Fashionably thin	Emaciated, with sharply jutting hipbones
Financially secure	Has \$5 in the bank
Flexible	Desperate
Free Spirit	Substance abuser
Friendship first	As long as friendship involves nudity
Fun	Good with a remote and a six pack
Fun-loving	Expects to be entertained
Gentle	Comatose
Good sense of humor	Watches a lot of television
Gourmet cook	Can just about manage microwaving frozen dinners
High standards	Blind to own flaws, unforgiving of others'
Honest	Pathological liar
Independently wealthy	Owns millions of worthless dotcom options
Internet entrepreneur	Big-time spammer
Intuitive	Your opinion doesn't count
Irreverent	Nasty and lacking basic social skills
Life of the party	Poor impulse control
Likes to cuddle	Insecure, overly dependent
Marriage minded	A bigamist
Moody	Manic-depressive
Nontraditional	Ex-wife lives in the basement
Old-fashioned	Lights out, missionary position only
Openminded	Desperate
Outgoing	Loud
Passionate	Loud
Perfect	Has mastered the art of self-delusion
Physically fit	Still breathing
Poet	Boring manic-depressive
Professional	Owns a white button-down
Reliable	Shows up on time, give or take 3 hours
Resourceful	Calls the super to fix a leaky faucet
Self-employed	Jobless
Sophisticated	Spends afternoons at Woolworth's perfume counter
Soulful	Quiet manic-depressive
Spiritual	Involved with a cult
Spiritually evolved	Subject to delusions and fainting spells
Spontaneous	Picks his nose at traffic lights
Spontaneous/Eclectic	Scatterbrained
Stable	Occasional stalker, but never arrested
Stylish	Slave to every fad that comes down the pike
Successful	Won \$10 in the lottery once
Sultry/Sensual	Easy
Swarthy	Sweaty even when cold or standing still

Thoughtful	Says "Please" when demanding a beer
Unaffected and earthy	Slob and lacking basic social skills
Uninhibited	Lacking basic social skills
Very human	Quasimodo's best friend
Wants Soulmate	One step away from stalking
Writer	Once scribbled on a bathroom stall
Youthful	Over 40, and trying to deny it

Courtesy 'nix *Fortune Cookies*, Net folklore, and the author's twisted sense of humor



# The Art of Telling Jokes

The aim of a joke is not to degrade the human being but to remind him that he is already degraded.

George Orwell

People like to be entertained. They enjoy laughing and appreciate a person who brings a smile to their face. They will readily accept 'most anyone who can make them laugh, even a shy stranger.

Jokes are an icebreaker. They can introduce you to a group of strangers or to a woman you have not previously met. They can renew acquaintanceships on an upbeat note. Humor can break down the wall of shyness.

Q: How many surrealists does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Two. One to hold the giraffe, the other to fill the bathtub with brightly colored machine tools.

You want to tell a joke? First, learn the joke. Understand it. Memorize it. Feel it in your gut. In privacy, practice telling it aloud. Record your efforts. Listen to yourself. Practice until you have mastered it.

Save the joke for an appropriate moment. When there's a natural pause in the conversation, when silence falls and something needs to fill it, when people are looking at you, expecting you to say something, anything, when making polite noises just won't do.

Pace your delivery. Speak at normal conversational speed, possibly even a bit slower. Control your breathing (an art unto itself), and this will time your speaking. Breathing paces speaking, it limits how fast the words come out. Find your own natural rhythm. Timing is critical.

Modulate your voice. The circumstances will determine the optimum loudness. Amid crowd noise, you will speak somewhat more loudly than usual, but generally talk more softly than normal conversational level, especially speaking one-on-one. Soft, but clear, gets attention. Enunciate, but do not overdo it.

Keep eye contact and smile. In a group, shift your focus from one person to another. Make each man and woman feel that you are telling the joke for them alone. You are the conductor, orchestrating their laughter.

Enjoy yourself. Your jokes are funny, and they bring enjoyment to others.

A truckdriver walks into a bar, followed by 40 monkeys. The bartender naturally asks him what's with the monkeys. "I had a contract to deliver them somewhere or other, but I can't find the paperwork. Now I don't know what to do with them. Any suggestions?"

"Why not take them to the zoo?", the bartender answers. "Good thought", says the driver and disappears out the door with them.

The next night, the truckdriver shows up, again accompanied by the monkeys, but this time they're all wearing sunglasses. "What? I thought you took them to the zoo", says the surprised bartender. "I did, and it was a great idea. They made faces at the lions, threw fish to the seals,

ate cotton candy, and had a fine old time. So, tomorrow I'm taking them to the beach."

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## Working a Room

Walk purposefully into a room full of strangers. Instantly observe, scan the configurations, the patterns of how people cluster, "the lay of the land". Calculate and intuit from this where the "power centers" are. Identify the important persons, the centers of attraction. You have developed your sensitivity and practiced until this is second nature to you.

At this point, there are two options. The *ruthless* strategy involves cynical manipulation of people for your ends, "games playing". The *responsible* strategy means caring, giving attention to people's needs, and acting like a human being. This second option, while riskier, is more appropriate for the shy person, and indeed for any moral person.

### Ruthless Strategy:

Single out the "important" people, and ignore the rest. Approach, in succession, each group of persons you wish to influence. Adopt a facade of aloofness (slightly understated arrogance), detachment, and a lack of involvement - a guise that projects personal power. Aggressively push "hot buttons" to manipulate the person you are facing, then briskly move on to the next. Spend time only with those who can serve your purposes. Leave envy and emotional wreckage behind you (what do you care?).

### Responsible Strategy:

Seek out the "loners", the people like yourself, the ones who appear shy, lonely, in need of attention. Give the necessary emotional support to everyone you speak with. Listen attentively. Be open and sympathetic. Take the time to satisfy other people's needs. Respect others' feelings, but be prepared to have your own hurt. Keep your presence of mind and be resilient. Leave joy and healing behind you (you care).

"Working a room" is a variant of the art of mingling, of blending into any given space containing groups of socializing people, of becoming part of the 'action'. Making the transition from foreground to background, from *intruder* to "one of us" is no easy matter, and requires considerable finesse.



## Ideas For Unusual Dates

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**There are nine-and-sixty ways  
of constructing tribal lays  
*and every single one of them is right!***

**Rudyard Kipling**

- Kite flying in the meadow, amidst the running, laughing children
- Hiking, in the mountains, or in the stillness of the shady woods
- Renting bikes and together touring the town, or countryside
- Swimming... floating on your back while she splashes water in your face
- Touring the neighborhood together on foot
- Exploring a nearby town by tour bus
- Going to the circus
- Going to the carnival
- Going to the zoo
- Going to a secluded beach
- Visiting a ghost town
- Walking the tracks of an abandoned railroad
- Touring a ship in the harbor
- A hot air balloon ride (expensive, but unforgettable)
- Collecting mineral specimens at a nearby mine or quarry
- Searching an abandoned homesite for coins and jewelry with a metal detector
- Seeing Saturn's rings at the observatory
- Horseback riding (let her teach you if you don't know how)
- A hayride
- A ride together in a horse-drawn carriage
- A train ride to a nearby town
- Ride the ferry across the harbor
- Going to a museum to see the Mayan relics exhibit
- Dancing at the local ballroom
- A poetry reading (bring your own bad poetry, definitely)
- Ice skating under the lights, at night
- Ice fishing on a frozen lake
- Tobogganing
- Cross-country skiing
- White-water rafting
- Rollerskating in the town square at dawn
- Building a snow fortress
- Planting a tree in her back yard
- Gathering blackberries
- Playing tennis or handball
- Playing board games at the local coffee house
- Playing hopscotch together
- Exploring an antique shop or used bookstore
- Going to a flea market
- Going to an estate auction
- Having a picnic
- Sitting on a park bench and telling each other stories
- Reading parts from a book of stage plays
- Writing a short story together

- **Attending a neighborhood street fair**
- **Star watching, seeing how many of the constellations you can learn from a handbook of the night sky**
- **Together, visiting a nursing home and entertaining the sick and the elderly**
- **Doing the wash together at the local laundromat**

**There are three possible parts to a date, of which at least two must be offered: entertainment, food, and affection. It is customary to begin a series of dates with a great deal of entertainment, a moderate amount of food, and the merest suggestion of affection. As the amount of affection increases, the entertainment can be reduced proportionately. When the affection IS the entertainment, we no longer call it dating. Under no circumstances can the food be omitted.**

*Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behaviour*





**Flirting is the gentle art of making a man feel pleased with himself.**

**Helen Rowland**

**Flirtation is not much more than a dumbed-down form of courtship,  
a heroic attempt to present dime-store coquetry as high art.**

**Leopold Trepper**

**Flirtation:**

**A set of ceremonial behaviors, relics of long-forgotten mating rituals, consisting of highly stylized mannerisms intended to attract attention or seduce. There is a strong implication of frivolity, teasing, and lack of serious intent.**

**Imagine a trashy scenario, straight out of a scratched and flickery black-and-white grade B melodrama from the 1940's.**

**The dying afternoon sun, barely perceptible through tightly drawn shades, casts jaundiced splotches on the rococo wallpaper of the shabbily elegant room. The hypnotic beat-beat-beat of the monstrous old-fashioned ceiling fan. The dark, exotic "dragon lady" - in compellingly dreamlike waves of silence - slowly blinks her enormously cruel blacker-than-black almond eyes at you across the dimness, licking her lips with all the merciless languor of a Persian cat contemplating a delicacy she may, when it pleases her, pounce on and leisurely dismember...**

**Here then is the dilemma of being entangled in a flirtation. A bizarre compounding of the rapturously seductive and the treacly nightmarish, somewhat akin to being slowly drowned in deliciously sweet, clinging syrup. Being "vamped" by a desirable woman provides a dizzying ego boost, but with a cloying aftertaste. Are you being courted, or merely toyed with? Is the woman set on *you* in particular, or would any other available male have done just as well? Is this "for real", or just a flirtation?**

**From the woman's point of view, flirting seems a safe way of initiating contact at a distance, and so avoiding point-blank rejection. As a man, your reaction runs the gamut from amusement, and perhaps mild annoyance, to being driven mad by desire, and choking in frustration and humiliation. This is a losing game, and a very crooked one.**

**In times past, flirting skills passed down as part of the folklore, from mother to daughter, from sister to sister, and in the peer group. In the modern era, the so-called art of flirtation propagates by crude imitation, prepackaged in cellophane, its exaggerated theatrical gestures making up in clumsy**

aggressiveness what is lacking in subtlety. The end result is a one-size-fits-all generic flirtation module, something completely useless for non-mainstream shy folk. The purveyors of this raggedy hand-me-down schlock are (what else?) television and the video candy that Hollywood merchandises.

Flirting has become little more than a shopworn cliché. It serves as a shoddy counterfeit for the graceful interplay between the sexes. Where now is the sultry appeal of a Lauren Bacall teasing Bogart in "To Have Or Have Not", the finely delineated *presence*, the deadly, haunting beauty of a Jean Tierney in "Laura"? And where can be found a man of a stature sufficient to evoke such smoldering passion?

Should you, as a shy man, participate in this nasty little amusement?

Considering your particular circumstance, shyness, acting grossly out of character invariably results in awkward, stilted behavior. You risk making a fool of yourself, and for little gain. For your personality type, a more straightforward approach, an open and 'honest' courtship generally works out better.

Flirting basically remains ritualized "women's behavior", and men take part in the game at their peril. The most effective strategy, should you in fact desire closeness with the woman flirting with you or at you, consists in actually removing yourself from the 'dance'. Rather than playing the expected role in the drama, step back and distance yourself from it. Display only enough interest to keep the pot boiling. Mild encouragement, or even a show of studied indifference is more effective than enthusiastic attention. Make the woman sing for her supper.

As always, the key to controlling the situation is knowing your place in the scheme of things.



# HOW-2 Meet Women

by

Cartaphilus

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Feedback

*A Letter From a Reader*

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I received the following response to [chapter 6](#) of *How-2 Meet Women*. The writer chose to remain anonymous, even going to such lengths as forging the return address on the e-mail message, so I could not ask permission to "publish" it. After long deliberation, I concluded that the possible benefits to the intended audience of this series outweigh any considerations of respecting the privacy of the letter writer\*. This is the complete, unedited text of the letter, followed by my own brief analysis/commentary.

\*It is, of course, normally my policy to ask the permission of the writer before publishing any correspondence.

<Header deleted>

Well, Cartaphilus, I'm not sure I agree with your bold advice concerning the writing of letters. A woman who has been introduced to a man briefly, will certainly (if not too dependent on the host's punch bowl) if not vividly remember him for quite a while, even if his name is forgotten. Which brings me to another point--after an evening of new introductions, what promises that she will remember him by the name or even description in the letter? When I say she will remember him, I mean that she will remember The Introduction and, if you will, First Impression, and out of that context, Barely At All. To write a letter after a brief introduction would not be a compliment, but an insult. Unless his aim is to flatter in an adolescent and foggy manner (a. how can you truly flatter someone if you don't know them at all; b. 7th-grade girls know that letters from boys are at best a mild source of amusement), without any expectation of a response, I believe that letters are best left for the future "courting days".

It seems we stumble once again upon the original problem--how to become more than just that contextual memory. Here it is that I suggest a radical (reactionary?) solution. Stop looking for Any Woman, start looking for your soulmate. Why waste time laboriously building a doomed relationship? There are at least 100,000 women out there who are perfectly compatible for every man, and vice versa. Don't bother with "dream girls" who are more fantasy than personal reality--they are always bitter disappointments. A man must look for his female equivalent, regardless of age, race, profession, etc. A woman with the same sense of humor is hard NOT to get along with. A woman whose outward personality mimics his own, will immediately take notice. Mustering confidence becomes obsolete because the two discover instinctually how much they

understand each other. What I am suggesting is to disregard the memories of all those women that it is imagined are unaccessable (or only by unasked intrusion into their letterboxes or home computer) and stop looking COMPLETELY for as long as possible. Disregard the woman who is in thoughts endlessly, as a symbol of That Which Cannot Be Had, and discover the One Who is Too Shy to Make Eye Contact. If both tend toward uncomfortable silences, no new ground is being broken. Any approach at all is sufficient. At work, borrow pencils, offer chewing gum, ANYTHING. But don't pretend to be a Romeo--be awkward if awkwardness is comfortable. Begin to understand her limits, and cultivate her acceptances. Show adoration by imparting respect. Already, the common link is painful shyness. Neither is a stranger to pain, so the empathy is an oasis. Share painful or embarrassing stories and laugh at each other. Tease and allow teasing. Learn to laugh again with a woman. But most of all, no disappointments or regrets. And NO LIVING IN FANTASYLAND!!!

-- anonymous romantic  
(please don't find me)

That's some mighty powerful prose there. The correspondent makes much of the premise that two lonely, hurt people will inevitably find one another, bond, and live happily ever after. One might wish that "real life" were more like the movie *Marty*, and that fate would bring together, nay, fling together kindred souls, with muted orchestral accompaniment and tears of happiness at appropriate intervals. Harsh experience dictates, on the contrary, that the typical shy, inexperienced male needs quite a bit of personal growth before he can handle a committed relationship.

> To write a letter after a brief introduction would not be a compliment, but an insult.

The *intent* of such a letter is to compliment, to convey honest and honorable feelings. Certainly, writing to a virtual stranger does involve considerable risk of rejection, and it surely requires a certain skill with the written word for any reasonable chance of success. All the same, you do need to have faith, to believe that you can touch a woman's heart with words, even if she scarcely knows you.

> 7th-grade girls know that letters from boys are at best a mild source of amusement

Women who operate at the emotional level of a "7th-grade girl" are best steered clear of, in any case.

> Stop looking for Any Woman, start looking for your soulmate.

Good idea, but how to implement it? Richard Bach has some interesting observations about soulmates and the search for same in his book, *The Bridge Across Forever*. This should be required reading for all who consider themselves romantics.

> There are at least 100,000 women out there who are perfectly compatible for every man and vice versa.

Not so fast! I contend that while some men could indeed attain happiness with 100,000 (or 10,000,000) possible mates, others would find just a handful of compatible women, still others only one, and for some, sadly, there are none. \*

> Don't bother with "dream girls" who are more fantasy than personal reality

Agreed. See my comments about the "beautiful people" in Chapter 3.

> A man must look for his female equivalent, regardless of age, race, profession, etc.

Bernard Shaw, in his thought provoking play, *Man and Superman*, makes the point that if a man did find his female counterpart, they would be completely incompatible on an emotional level, literally unable to live with one another.

> A woman with the same sense of humor is hard NOT to get along with.

People with *any* sense of humor at all are rare, and to be treasured. Expecting the *same* sense of humor is indulging in wild optimism.

> A woman whose outward personality mimics his own, will immediately take notice.

Again, this is based on the premise that "like attracts like". Magical thinking?

> Mustering confidence becomes obsolete because the two discover instinctually how much they understand each other.

Or, they discover how difficult it is to breach the barrier of shyness between them. Generally, one person or the other does have to take the initiative and "make the first move". This is where confidence, a minimum of social skills, and, of course, the willingness to risk rejection come into play.

> ... disregard the memories of all those women that it is imagined are unaccessable...

>

> ... stop looking COMPLETELY for as long as possible ...



These are laudable suggestions, the implementation of which, unfortunately, requires rigorous internal discipline, and yes, self-confidence.

> ... discover the One Who is Too Shy to Make Eye Contact...

Yes, but how? Trust to *fate*?

> Any approach at all is sufficient. At work, borrow pencils, offer chewing gum, ANYTHING.

Good advice, but again, requiring a fair measure of self-confidence.

> Begin to understand her limits, and cultivate her acceptances. Show adoration by imparting respect.

Well expressed, and entirely consistent with what I have been espousing.

> Neither is a stranger to pain, so the empathy is an oasis.

This assumes the maturity to be able to look beyond one's own pain and reach out to another. But, I echo the sentiment, and I could not have expressed it any better myself.

> Share painful or embarrassing stories and laugh at each other. Tease and allow teasing.

Again, learning social skills means much hard work on the part of the individual. A sympathetic partner helps, but you need to have completed much of the healing and growth on your own before you are even ready to share the pain and yes, the laughter.

> Learn to laugh again with a woman.

Learn to laugh again, period. Only then you will be ready to laugh with another.

> ... no disappointments or regrets.

A noble resolve.

> And NO LIVING IN FANTASYLAND!!!

It is generally the case that the only way you can get a person to let go of his illusions is to pry his cold, dead fingers away from them.

> **--anonymous romantic**

I wish you every success and happiness, *Anonymous Romantic*, and hope to see the day when romantics no longer face ridicule and feel no need to remain anonymous.

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\* Certainly, a part of us withers in the absence of close relationships, nevertheless celibacy is a valid option for some persons. See the [Celibacy F.A.Q.](#)

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# HOW-2 Meet Women

by

Cartaphilus

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## Feedback

*Another Letter From a Reader*

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Here is yet another response to *HOW-2 Meet Women*. The author of this e-mail letter raises some valid concerns, points that deserve consideration. Every lonely man has, at some point, faced himself in the mirror and found himself wanting, unworthy of the company of his fellow human beings. Why? Because he has internalized the expectations of others and denied his own true uniqueness, the spark of the divine within his being that gives him his own special purpose among the living.

The letter is reprinted here with the permission of its author. His e-mail address and name have, of course, been deleted.

From <address deleted> Thu Aug 14 14:48:44 1997  
Date: Sun, 10 Aug 1997 03:16:45 -0800  
From: <name deleted>  
To: thegrendel@theriver.com  
Subject: Those are really wise words

I must admit it, i'm really a shy, sensitive guy at heart. But I have to constantly play the role of the sex starved, bold knight in order to simply SURVIVE. Why, just to get through the day I have to pretend to be a social animal, that I have to be reeking of libido and full of love...I admit it, I've fallen into the trap of your so succinctly stated "beautiful people" syndrome. Smug, unapproachable, and all that crap. I've discovered that being full of myself only leads to misery.

The trick is, how can I approach women, especially someone I would want to meet and get to know, and if I fail, escape with my pride and integrity intact? Women are vicious creatures..all too willing to hurl insults and put downs, and even though I try to play it off, sometimes I do take it personally and it really hurts. Even if they're nonvocal in their rejection, I can just tell by the vibe that they think I'm a jerk or a loser. It's hard enough to get the energy to be social enough to attract my one and only. So...what's the alternative? I've been considering hookers but that whole deal is just too crappy. And that's what it is, a "deal".

You don't have to answer my e-mail. But I would like to say your page has definitely been something to think about.

-a nihilistic hermit from <location deleted>

P.S. I am a romantic at heart. Iswear.;-)

---

From thegrendel@theriver.com Thu Aug 14 14:48:00 1997  
Date: Sun, 10 Aug 1997 16:52:07 -0700 (MST)  
From: "M. Leo Cooper" <thegrendel@theriver.com>  
To: <destination deleted>  
Subject: Re: Those are really wise words

On Sun, 10 Aug 1997, <name deleted> wrote:

> I must admit it, i'm really a shy, sensitive guy at heart.

Aren't we all?

> But I have to constantly play the role of the sex starved, bold knight  
> in order to simply SURVIVE.

No, you don't *have to*, you choose to.

> Why, just to get through the day I have to pretend  
> to be a social animal, that I have to be reeking of libido and full of  
> love ...

Why? To impress your friends? To attract women? If so,  
a) friends like that you don't need, and  
b) women like that you don't need.

> I admit it, I've fallen into the trap of your so succinctly  
> stated "beautiful people" syndrome. Smug, unapproachable, and all that  
> crap. I've discovered that being full of myself only leads  
> to misery.

I have a pretty good hunch that many of the so-called "beautiful people" feel out of place, that they are really somewhat normal human beings just faking it. Pretending to be something you're not requires a tremendous expenditure of energy, of life force that could better be used for higher purposes, such as making you a more interesting, more vital, more lovable person.

> The trick is, how can I approach women, especially someone I would  
> want to meet and get to know, and if I fail, escape with my pride  
> and integrity intact?

Develop enough self-confidence so that you can deal with rejection.

> Women are vicious creatures...all too willing to hurl insults and put downs

Some women are like this, and those are the ones you want to avoid. Catching a few insults and putdowns is a small enough price to pay to find out what kind of person they are. Consider it fair warning that this is a woman you want to leave to some other victim to deal with.

> sometimes I do take it personally and it really hurts.

Pain is part of being human. Learning that you can endure and survive it makes you stronger.

> Even if they're nonvocal in their rejection, I can just tell by the  
> vibe that they think I'm a jerk or a loser.

You are responsible for your behavior, not for their thoughts about you. If they think you a jerk/loser, that means emphatically that they are not the women for you. Your own inner judgment about yourself is what counts.

People who are "inner directed," who have confidence and a good self-image, are much less susceptible to manipulation and exploitation by others. The lesson for lonely people is to "optimize" what they are, to become "inner directed".

> It's hard enough to get the energy to be social enough to attract my one and only.

> So...what's the alternative? I've been considering hookers but that whole deal

> is just too crappy. And that's what it is, a "deal".

Patience, patience, and fortitude. Keep trying, and don't set a timetable for yourself. Develop yourself, become a more interesting, "worthwhile", and confident person, and you will attract others to you.

Resorting to prostitutes is a dead certain path to despair and disease.

> You don't have to answer my e-mail. But I would like to say your page  
> has definitely been something to think about.

Thank you for your encouraging words.

May I have your permission to quote from your letter (keeping you and your e-mail address anonymous, of course)? I think you eloquently express concerns of many single young men.

> -a nihilistic hermit from <deleted>  
>

> P.S. I am a romantic at heart. Iswear.;-)

When it comes time for you to decide between nihilism and romanticism, I hope you make the choice that leads to your personal happiness.

All the best.

(Cartaphilus)

Divinity must live within herself:  
Passions of rain, or moods in falling snow;  
Grievings in loneliness, or unsubdued  
Elations when the forest blooms; gusty  
Emotions on wet roads on autumn nights;  
All pleasures and all pains, remembering ...

Wallace Stevens, "Sunday Morning"


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# Troubleshooting Guide

If I had a formula for bypassing trouble, I would not pass it around. Trouble creates a capacity to handle it. I don't say embrace trouble; that's as bad as treating it as an enemy. But I do say meet it as a friend, for you'll see a lot of it and you had better be on speaking terms with it.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

You can expect difficulties and setbacks in the course of your social development. Some problems have a relatively simple "fix", while others require careful attention and a great deal of patience. Consider problems as challenges and learning experiences, rather than as painful failures and evidence of incompetence.

 Women seem to find you physically repulsive. They are uncomfortable in your presence and it seems as if they can't wait to get away from you.

- Do you shower regularly and use deodorant and/or mouthwash, as necessary?

Body odor and pungent breath are a naturally occurring phenomenon, a product of the human condition, and they are not necessarily repellent or offensive . . . to persons already involved in a close relationship. When meeting strangers, though, it is expedient to smell 'neutral'.

- Are you at a hyper pitch of nervousness when near a woman?


Does your desperation for contact show?

Do sweat stains start spreading under your armpits and back of your shirt just at the thought of approaching a woman?

(Just as ill people have their own distinctive odor, so does shyness afflict some men with the smell of desperate loneliness, and women sense this all too well.)

- ♦ Reread the sidebar on [overcoming nervousness](#).
- ♦ Take measures to build up your self-confidence.

- Do you force your presence on women in awkward circumstances . . . without the necessary preliminaries, or when they are otherwise occupied?
- Do you approach women who would likely reject you?

 The women you find interesting want no part of you, while the ones attracted to you hold no appeal.

- Question your basic assumptions.

- ♦ Have you bought into the "pop culture" ideal of what a woman should look like?
- ♦ Are you obsessed by visions of a blonde super-model?
- ♦ Is appearance more important to you than personality?
- ♦ Do you limit yourself to women your parents, your friends, your social group would approve of?
- ♦ You have such low self-esteem that you secretly believe there must be something wrong with any woman who will have you.

 Problems starting and sustaining a conversation.

- You are afraid to even talk to a woman.

Practice, practice, practice. Courage.

- Women do not respond.

- ♦ Bad timing.
- ♦ Obnoxiously aggressive, too "pushy".
- ♦ Wait for cues and signals that your presence would be welcome.
- ♦ Reread [Chapter 4](#).

- As soon as a woman begins to show an interest, you suddenly get a lump in your throat, stutter, become tongue-tied.

No one has yet discovered a "magic bullet" against choking up. Bear in mind that there is no pressure on you to "perform", and this will help you take a deep breath, calm down, and regain your sense of perspective. If you feel secure in your own identity and see yourself as worthy of a relationship, then you realize that there is not all that much at stake in any one particular encounter, and that if you mess one up, you'll get other chances.

- After starting a conversation, you run out of things to say.

- ♦ Review the [list of conversation topics](#) in Chapter 5.
- ♦ Without being too intrusive, ask the woman about herself and her life.

## Love letters

- The woman becomes offended.

- ♦ Do your "homework" before writing to a woman you have yet to talk to.
- ♦ Take care not to write to women who are not 'eligible'.
- ♦ Be more discreet in your use of language.
- ♦ Consider whether a *love letter* is even appropriate in these particular circumstances.

- No response.

- ♦ Choose the situation more carefully.
- ♦ More skillful use of words.
- ♦ Accompany the letter with a single red rose.

## Telephone

- You rapidly run out of things to say to a woman on the phone.

- ♦ Do some advanced preparation before calling.
- ♦ Keep the conversations short.
- ♦ Reread [chapter 5](#).

- You do great on the phone, but in person you strike out.

- ♦ Don't build up her expectations to unrealistic levels in phone conversations.
- ♦ Be more honest and forthright about yourself, your appearance, and your shortcomings before you meet face-to-face.
- ♦ Take more time to get to know each other before meeting in person.
- ♦ Don't *shoot your entire wad* on the phone. Hold something back, so the woman will find new and interesting aspects of you to explore when you meet.

## Personal Ads



- You have made a career of answering personals. You buy postage stamps in multiple sheets of 50, and have developed a bad case of 'writer's cramp.' So far, though, no answers to any of your letters.
  - ♦ You respond to the wrong ads.
  - ♦ You respond too late, after the ads have gone "stale."
  - ♦ If the ad gives detailed specifications for the type of man the woman seeks, don't even bother responding if you are not a fairly close 'fit'.
  - ♦ Your responses are too bland, generic. There is nothing in them to make you "stand out from the crowd."
- You have placed a number of your own ads, with only a few disappointing responses.
  - ♦ Your ads are not well enough written, possibly not specifically enough 'targeted'.
  - ♦ Perhaps you have placed them in inappropriate publications.
  - ♦ Change the wording of your ads.
  - ♦ Break out of the mold and try something unusual, even mildly dramatic.
  - ♦ Be patient. Keep trying.
  - ♦ Reread [chapter 7](#).

## Dating

- As long as the two of you are doing *something*, everything is fine, but when you are alone with each other you seem to have nothing to say.


You are seeing too much of each other, too early in the relationship.

This does not bode well for the two of you. If you cannot communicate, you may not have much in common.


- The woman you are going with consistently shows up late for dates.

You are a low priority with her. Reconsider how important she is in *your* life.

- After meeting a woman, things usually go well for the first few dates, but then she loses interest in you. This seems to be a repeating pattern in your relationships.
  - ♦ Become a more interesting person.
  - ♦ Develop your talents and explore the depths of your potential.
  - ♦ Review basic conversational skills.
  - ♦ Do you attach yourself to the woman, 'smothering' her?
  - ♦ Do your constant attentions allow her to take you for granted?
  - ♦ Reread [chapter 11](#).


 A certain woman you know casually has shown an interest in you. You would like to get to know her better, but neither of you has the nerve to make the first move.

- ♦ Make yourself unavailable for a week or so; give yourself some breathing space.
- ♦ Smile at her, say hello, engage in light conversation at every opportunity.
- ♦ Ask to meet her over coffee or in a public place, in a tension-free setting.
- ♦ You just "happen" to have an extra ticket for a music performance.
- ♦ Send her a short note (see [chapter 6](#)).


 You *know* the woman has strong feelings for you because she becomes nervous, red-faced and flustered in your presence. She seems to have even more severe shyness and self-confidence problems than you do.

- ♦ Give her the support and understanding she needs, so she can develop confidence in herself. Lend her strength.
- ♦ Maintain a sympathetic, non-threatening manner toward her. Let her feel secure in trusting you.
- ♦ Listen to her. Give her a chance to "open up".

- ◆ Share your own doubts and fears with her. Let her know that you, too, are human.
- ◆ Show her that you care in a gentle way. Be protective of her.
- ◆ Be patient.

 There's this appealing woman sitting among a group of friends at a table in a café. She meets your gaze, smiles, then resumes talking animatedly to her tablemates. She might be interested in you, but...


- ◆ Have the waiter pass her a discreet note.
- ◆ Have a bottle of fine wine delivered to her table, with your compliments.
- ◆ Casually toss your business card onto their table as you pass by on the way out.
- ◆ Show up again the next day, same time, same place.

 You are going out with a woman who shows you no affection at all, who constantly criticizes everything you do, who has no interest in the things that are important to you. She permits you to take her to dinner and entertain her, and makes you feel that this is what you *owe* her for the pleasure of her company. You are nevertheless overwhelmed and grateful to be near her, and if you could only get her to return your love, it would make your life complete.


- ◆ If it is your life's ambition to be abused and exploited, then you have found your soulmate. Otherwise, run, don't walk, to the nearest exit.

**"You have to come to terms with stupidity, and make it work for you."**

Frank Zappa

 You seem stuck in a rut. Your life has settled into a dull routine of loneliness and even the prospect of a close relationship hardly excites you any more.

- ◆ Try a change of pace.  
Fill up your free time with activities.  
Take classes. Join clubs. Do volunteer work.  
Devote yourself to a hobby.  
Start work on your novel.
- ◆ Avoid passive entertainment.  
Television mires you even deeper in depression, paralyzes your initiative, and distorts your perceptions.
- ◆ Step out of the role.  
Be a bit more flexible, and slightly less predictable in your behavior.  
Deliberately act out of character occasionally.
- ◆ If you are in a serious state of depression, consider professional counseling.

 You are tired of making a fool of yourself over women, sick of being humiliated and rejected. You don't know where you'll find the courage to keep on looking for love.

- ◆ Get a good night's sleep.  
Wake up fortified with a teeny bit of optimism, and smile at the people you meet on the way to work.
- ◆ Forget about girlfriend hunting for a few weeks, perhaps a month or two, and concentrate on improving your relationships with your family and friends.

 Absolutely *nothing* seems to work.

- ◆ Perhaps it's just not the right time in your life to be seeking a relationship.  
You might not yet be ready for one.
- ◆ Treat yourself to a six month's breather, a vacation from looking for a girlfriend.  
Enlarge your circle of acquaintances.

Develop new interests. Go back to school. Start your own business. Change your life.  
Grow, learn, and be patient.

Brady's First Law of Problem Solving:

When confronted by a difficult problem, you can solve it  
more easily by reducing it to the question:

"How would the Lone Ranger have handled this?"

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## Test

**Examinations are formidable even to the best prepared, for even the greatest fool may ask more than the wisest man can answer.**

C.C. Colton

### **What self-help book could be complete without a test?**

Consider this a simulation rather than a traditional test of skills. There are no wrong answers. The purpose of these exercises is to test your resourcefulness, your ingenuity, and your presence of mind . . . when faced with one of "life's little surprises."

To get the maximum benefit from this test, take it twice. The first time, allow yourself *no* time to think. Answer with the first thing that pops into your head. In "real life", you need to react almost instantly to developing situations. The second time, you can allow yourself the luxury of pondering at length on what you should have done, a sort of leisurely *post mortem*.

Many of the situations presented here have actually taken place.

1. As you walk from a store, a young woman approaches you. She brashly announces, with a mischievous grin plastered across her face, that she had been watching you paw through the cookware. "I could tell, you add up the prices in your head", she says. How do you answer?
2. Walking down the street, you notice an attractive woman several hundred feet away seeming to stare at you, possibly even smile. Do you approach her? How? What do you say?
3. At the supermarket, a well-dressed woman examines your shopping cart. She remarks that you seem to have a special liking for canned spaghetti. Could she be "hitting" on you or is she just making a joke at your expense?
4. You have been good, but not intimate friends with a woman for years. She trusts and confides in you. She is in the process of breaking up with her longtime boyfriend. She turns to you for comfort and solace. Is it time for something more than friendship between the two of you?
5. On the street, you run into a classmate from high school. She walks right up to you and starts chatting, as if she had seen you just last week, rather than a decade ago. She would not have condescended to notice you back in school, but now she is extremely friendly, even intrusive. Do you respond to her overtures?
6. At work, a woman loudly announces to her friends that she would accept an invitation from "anyone" to a certain dance club. She happens to be looking in your direction and she seems to have taken pains to ensure you will overhear her. You barely know the woman, and had not even considered approaching her. What to do?
7. As the office party breaks up, amidst considerable noise and confusion, a woman you hardly know grabs you and kisses you on the lips, hard. After you recover from shock, you decide you rather enjoyed the sensation. Is she drunk, or does this indicate genuine interest in you?
8. The woman you have been going out with consistently shows up late for dates, at times an hour or more. She always has an excuse, but you are beginning to get just a bit annoyed.
9. As you pass a group of young women on the street, one of them makes a rather suggestive remark about you, to the accompaniment of raucous laughter from the others.

10. *The inevitable blind date disaster.* A good friend has set you up with "the perfect woman". You talked with her on the phone and seemed to hit it off quite nicely. When you show up at the rendezvous, here is this alluring Hollywood film star wannabe in a tight fitting sweater, reeking of expensive perfume, literally oozing glamor, flaunting her good looks. She takes one look at *you* and visibly recoils. She seemed to have been expecting a male counterpart, and her distaste is all too plain.

If there are no wrong answers, neither are there correct ones to the problems given. A workable strategy depends not only on the situation and the people involved, but on timing, "delivery", and a good measure of luck. The following are only suggestions, tantalizing hints to provoke your thinking. Detailed solutions are left as an "exercise for the reader".

1. Smile. That's always a good start. "Hmmm, I'm honored that you consider my shopping technique worthy of your attention, milady. While I don't consider shopping for frying pans a critically important activity, all the same, I do my humble best. And, no, I can't quite track *all* the prices, as I seem to have a sticking digit somewhere behind my left eye. It helps if I whack my forehead occasionally, like so..."
2. Smile back. Wave. Give her the chance to respond. If she does not, shrug your shoulders and walk on.
3. "Well, yes, I enjoy this particular brand for the tangy metallic flavor of the sauce. For a fellow who finds boiling water a nearly impossible task, I think I do a pretty fair job at making this stuff at least marginally fit to eat."
4. Remain friends. Give her comfort and support, but be extremely wary of becoming more closely involved with her, at least for the present.  
Meanwhile, don't put your life on hold waiting for dramatic developments in this relationship. Continue to pursue and cultivate friendships and relationships with other women.
5. Talk is cheap. Stay noncommittal, and let her carry the burden of the conversation.
6. This is a *double whammy*. On the one hand, she is displaying behavior typical of a giggly teenager. On the other, she is making it perfectly clear that she would be using you only as a convenience, to provide an escort for her into the club, and that any generic male would do just as well. Let her find a more willing victim.
7. The next working day, flowers for her arrive at the office, with an unsigned card saying, "The kiss lingers".
8. You seem to be number 468 on her list of priorities. Have a long talk with her, but realize the relationship may be in serious trouble.
9. Rudeness has become a national epidemic. Consider this a minor annoyance, the equivalent of bird droppings falling on you from the sky. Keep walking.
10. "I'm not quite what you were expecting, Leila. It would appear that we are quite unsuited for each other, and it would be my pleasure to relieve you of the obligation of spending the evening with me."

Put her into a taxi. Go home. Cook yourself a spicy pasta. Read a good book. Consider yourself fortunate not to have wasted a perfectly fine evening entertaining an airhead.

Construct other possible scenarios, based on your own experience and on what you have read and heard about. Act out what you would do, speaking your role aloud, as if you were a performer in a play.

**Keep in mind that words and actions are context-sensitive, that what might be appropriate in one situation would be wildly out of place in another. Also, doing nothing is generally preferable to doing something stupid.**

**For added realism, enlist a friend or family member to play the role of the woman involved. Be aware, though, that when "the real thing" comes, it will be unexpected and almost certainly take you completely by surprise.**

**Experience is the worst teacher. It always gives the test first and the instruction afterward.**

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# Shards & Fragments

## Assorted Tips and Hints

These odds 'n ends, written on scraps of paper and the backs of envelopes, turned up among the contents of Uncle Filbert's ancient steamer trunk. They are to be taken "with a grain of salt", to be sure, but strangely enough, much of the "advice" actually seems to work.

### Secrets of successful seduction artists.

- **Identifying *vulnerable* women.**  
Observation skills, sensitivity, skill at interpreting behavior, body language.
- **A repertoire of practiced behaviors.**  
Rehearsed routines that work in one-on-one social situations.
- **Single-mindedness.**  
*A narrow focus* on female behavior patterns.
- **Nerves of steel.**  
Impervious to rejection and putdowns.
- **Determination**  
Not discouraged by temporary setbacks.
- **Unshakable confidence.**  
Success will come - if not this time, then the next, or the next after that.

### How can you tell if she 'likes' you?

- She seems interested in who you are, what you do, whether you are single.
- She "lights up" when you speak to her.
- She just happens to wear different clothes every time you see her (dresses up for you?).

There are also certain physical telltales, such as enlargement of the pupils, slightly defocused gaze, rapid pulse, and reddened skin that *may* indicate infatuation. If she get flustered and nervous speaking to you, and is unable to make eye contact, it could be that she is overwhelmed, quite taken with you, but too shy to express it.

**Note that this is NOT a reliable method, as the signs can easily be misread and could signify quite the opposite in some situations. It is far better to trust the normal communications channels, to actually listen to what she says, if you want to understand her behavior toward you.**

### "Mesmerizing" a woman.

Everyone has a characteristic cadence in their movements, their mannerisms, their walk, their speech, their personal way of doing things. This is their heartbeat rhythm, their most intimate "signature",

their very style. When two people begin to draw together, they unconsciously adjust their rhythms to blend and synchronize. By design, you can subtly accelerate and reinforce this very natural process, using deliberate mimicry.

Speaking with her, detach part of your mind from the conversation, and gradually key your verbal responses to the cadence and timing of her speaking rhythm. Walking by her side, carefully copy her pace and cadence. Facing her, match her every breath, even her blink rate. You are trying to synchronize your physiological rhythms. The objective is to forge a harmony, a resonance, a unity from your physical nearness.

This methodology is presented for informational purposes only ("Don't try this at home, folks..."). Such techniques have their dangers and are not appropriate for general use, as there are very serious ethical implications. Caution and discretion advised.

Glendower: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.  
Hotspur: Why, so can I, or so can any man;  
But will they come when you do call for them?

Shakespeare, Henry IV

 How to attract the eyes of every woman present, as you walk into a room.

- Be dressed in a single, solid color.  
A dark shade, such as blue, green, or black works best, but white is also effective.
- Have several large metal ball bearings in your pocket.  
They make a subaudible clicking as you walk.
- Speak as little as possible, and in a whisper if you must.

*And now that you've got their attention, what are you going to do with it???*

 How to get a woman to approach *you*, to make the first move.

Most women have a natural reluctance to making the initial approach to a man, partly as a result of upbringing (yes, even in this day and age), and from fear of risking rejection. This creates a fairly high barrier to be overcome before a woman will 'come on' to you... but she will if she wants you badly enough, if she perceives an opportunity to meet you slipping away, if she fears losing you to another woman.

- Make yourself accessible, but not too accessible.  
Let there be a boundary to get past, resistance to overcome. This suggests you have hidden depths, that you are more than you seem. The mysteriously tantalizing hint of "forbidden fruit"



intrigues and challenges women, it fascinates and inflames, it lets the imagination stray into the realm of illusion and desire.

Be friendly, but not fawning.

Make eye contact.

Come across as non-threatening, but somewhat detached, with an enigmatic air.

Speak softly, but authoritatively.

- Send out the right signals, with your eyes, your bearing, your body language.

Stand straight and show pride.

Radiate warmth and self-confidence.

Illuminate your personal space with your smile.

- Find or set up a context, a situation suitable for being approached (consider this an exercise in strategic thinking).

"Sadie Hawkins Day" dances, where it is expected that the woman selects her partner.

Certain meeting places, such as the notorious Café Keese, in Berlin, Germany, where it is the norm for women to invite men to their tables.

- Possess or master something that women want access to, such as specialized skills (law, medicine) or status / prestige.

 "Safe" gifts to give early in a relationship.

- Stuffed animals
- Bath oils and aromatic soaps
- Boxes of candy, especially premium and usual types
- Potted plants, especially semi-exotic ones, such as desert cacti
- Trinkets and key chain charms (sterling silver)
- Boxed games
- Unusual puzzles
- Paperweights made of semi-precious stones
- Mechanical music boxes
- Carved wooden figurines
- Almost anything with jade or amber in it
- Books

 Looking sharp without spending big bucks.

Buy clothes off the rack, or for that matter, in a thrift shop (no one will ever know), then pay a tailor about \$10 - \$30 each to form-fit and customize them.

#### Useful skills and attributes to cultivate (to attract women):

- Public speaking [rhetoric]

Keeping your poise in front of a group. Organizing your thoughts into a coherent presentation. Voice control.

- Storytelling
- Making people laugh
- Moving people to tears
- Comforting hurt people, easing pain
- The art of massage, *healing touch*
- Lending strength to those who need it
- Being able to borrow strength, when you need it
- Recognizing and avoiding self-destructive behaviors
- Resolving conflicts and defusing volatile situations (peacemaking)
- Picking up the pieces after a disaster
- Playing a musical instrument
- Ballroom dancing
- Gourmet cooking
- Problem solving
- Fixing things that are broken
- A trained memory
- Observation
- Being able to sense when someone is lying
- Seeing things from a different perspective
- "Thinking out of the box"
- Visualization skills
- Drawing and sketching
- Listening
- Knowing when to keep silent  
(as an alternative to making a fool of yourself)
- Giving advice
- Taking advice
- Teaching
- Knowing when to trust
- Inspiring trust
- Intuition
- Trusting your intuition
- Accepting
- Being able to accurately assess risk
- Knowing when to stand fast, and when to bail out
- A nose for trouble
- Presence of mind
- Grace under pressure
- Resourcefulness
- Decisiveness

- "Focus"
- Balance
- Detachment
- Calmness, inner peace
- Patience
- Compassion
- Giving of yourself
- Self-control
- Self-discipline
- Self-sufficiency
- Self-acceptance
- Coming to terms with what you are,  
and being at peace with yourself

"A Brief History of Romantic Love"  
(based on research fragments by an unidentified student)

For most of human history, single men have not had to concern themselves with meeting and courting women. Arranged marriage was the norm. Dating and relationships did not occupy a place in everyday life, and the social skills necessary for the practice of same were superfluous. Outside the sanction of marriage, seduction and secretive assignations were relatively common.

"Romantic love" is a somewhat recent innovation, originating in the High Middle Ages, most notably in the Twelfth Century court of Eleanor of Aquitaine, and spread among the royalty and aristocracy by wandering troubadours and minstrels. It is only since the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the Middle Class that the custom of marriage based on love gained wide acceptance, that is to say, respectability.

This is not to minimize or deprecate the role of attraction between persons, both on a physical and spiritual level, as a motivating factor in all the matings and couplings that have taken place throughout the ages. Men and women have always managed to circumvent the conventions and restraints of society in order to satisfy their own needs. Social boundaries exist to keep natural urges within bounds, to "tame" them for the sake of the common good. It is in their success in dealing with this apparent contradiction, in finding a balance point between the needs of the individual and the greater social good that civilizations are judged . . .

The pages following are badly water-stained and illegible.

... for love is strong as death, passion cruel as the grave; it blazes up like blazing fire, fiercer than any flame.

Song of Solomon 8:6 [NEB]

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** There are so many different ways of meeting women - through personal ads, at dances, parties, work. Which approach should I adopt?

**A:** A combination of strategies works best for most men. Go ahead and place ads, but by all means avail yourself of the other opportunities as well. You'll soon find what works best for you and in which social settings you are most comfortable.

**Q:** Does all of this mean that getting a girlfriend is *hard work*?

**A:** Just so. Finding a woman requires planning, determination, and sheer effort. Think of it as a full-time job, which is not to say that it can't be fun, too.

**Q:** Is it really necessary to faithfully follow all the steps in the program set forth in HOW-2 Meet Women? Can't I just skip the painful and time-consuming self-analysis and jump ahead to the interesting parts?

**A:** As with any endeavor, what you get out of it is directly proportional to the amount of work you put in. The greater the effort, the greater the return.

**Q:** Aren't there any shortcuts to proficiency in social skills? I know guys who seem to have been born with the knack of getting along with people, fitting into most any group, and "making it" with women. What do they have that I don't?

**A:** True, some are lucky enough to have developed social adeptness at an early age and seem to have an inborn talent for interacting with people. For the rest of us, social skills must be considered as just that, a set of *skills* to be learned and practiced, bit by bit, slowly and painfully, a craft to be mastered. It may take years, but even a total social "klutz" can get to the point where he is fairly comfortable among strangers, and he might even discover a hidden talent for mesmerizing at least a few of the women he meets.

**Q:** I'm so desperately shy that I usually can't even work up enough courage to approach any stranger, much less a woman I'd like to meet. Maybe I'm just not far enough along in my social development to benefit from the advice in "HOW-2 Meet Women". Where can I find help?

**A:** Quite a number of books claim to help painfully shy people overcome their social handicaps, and some persons can be helped by counseling and

therapy (assuming they can afford it). At some point, you may be ready to try *desensitizing* yourself to the terrors of meeting people by accepting the challenge of situations where you initiate contacts with strangers. You have a long and difficult journey ahead, and it will severely test your determination and strength of character. Good luck.

The [resources appendix](#) contains a listing of recommended books and websites for shy people.

**Q:** Do I really stand a chance, competing for a girlfriend against all the highly skilled seduction artists out there?

**A:** As a shy man, your main disadvantage is [lack of self-confidence](#). This you can overcome in time.

Now, consider some of the problems "seduction artists" have to contend with.

- Basic dishonesty.
- Short attention span.
- No sense of humor.
- Lack of depth. Totally focused on collecting "conquests", and this pretty much defines the entire content of their petty existence. These are essentially incomplete, defective human beings.
- An aura of *sleaziness* clings to them, somewhat like the barely-perceptible odor of rotting fruit.

All this improves the odds considerably, and at least gives you a fighting chance.

**Q:** I'm being driven crazy by loneliness. If I don't find a girlfriend soon, I'll . . .

**A:** You'll . . . learn to live with yourself, by yourself. Embrace your loneliness. You're not ready for a relationship yet.

There are so many other ways to find satisfaction in life outside a relationship. Achieve professional recognition. Set up a business. Do volunteer service at a nursing home. Learn to appreciate fine literature and classical music. Learn to play a musical instrument. Go camping out in the woods. Climb a mountain. Restore an old house. Become a gourmet cook. Learn a foreign language. Learn a computer language. Make friends with your neighbors. Get to know your aunts and uncles and nephews and nieces and cousins.

You need to seek and find . . . [yourself](#) before you can find others.

**Q:** I'm not ordinarily a shy person, but when I see a woman I'd like to meet, I freeze up and don't know how to act or what to say.

**A:** Lack of experience. Lack of self-confidence. Fear of [rejection](#).

Freezing up is an all too natural human response in situations where you're tense and anxious, afraid to do the wrong things, make a fool of yourself, and bollix things up. An essential part of your education is learning to stay cool under pressure.

Practice helps, too. Every chance you get, talk to women, women at work, women in the neighborhood, women at the laundromat, any women. Desensitize yourself to the anxiety of talking to women. It's no big deal.

**Q:** "HOW-2 Meet Women" wants me to lower my standards! You expect me to go out with a woman who is too old, too fat, or just plain too damn ugly? Gimme a break, dude.

**A:** Not so fast, bucko. *HMW* encourages you to raise your standards. In the strongest possible terms, it advises rejecting women not meeting the standards of common decency and simple humanity. This book teaches how to recognize and avoid malicious, cruel, twisted, untrustworthy, morally damaged, corrupted and spiritually diseased women. You learn to distinguish the essential (character) from the superficial (appearance). You come to realize that what you are looking for is a woman capable of loving you and worthy of being loved by you, *and that you will not settle for less.*

**Q:** So, "HOW-2 Meet Women" preaches a "goody two-shoes" philosophy, huh? Ha! Why don't you just come out and tell me what it takes to get women to jump into bed with me? Who needs all this wimpy moralizing and preaching?

**A:** Mr. Goody Two-Shoes replies to Mr. Wannabe Seducer that this book is for grownups. If and when you finally grow up, Mr. Wannabe, and you should only live so long, it might just dawn on you that being an ethical human being, treating others with respect and accepting nothing less in return - all this makes you a stronger person, one more effective in establishing and sustaining relationships, and, in fact, with a greater prospect of success in all aspects of life.

**Q:** Are you implying that there is something wrong with me if I want to sleep with and possess all the women I can get?

**A:** Yes, profoundly wrong. You will never be at peace with yourself, never find a balance point, never quiet the screaming inside you, never manage to fill the emptiness. You will never amount to very much in the greater scheme of things. You are deeply flawed, a catastrophic failure as a human being.

**Q:** Where do I find a good sex manual?

**A:** You won't find it here, dude. As it happens, whatever you might learn from a sex manual would be pretty much irrelevant to forming and maintaining a relationship.

**Q:** When I go to a dance or a party along with friends, I'm much less fearful and nervous, but it sure does complicate the business of meeting women. Is there any help for this?

**A:** As comforting as it may be to have your good buddies at your side, they become a major liability when you want to approach a woman. Go out with your friends to have a good time, but venture forth alone to meet women.

**Q:** I'm a mess. Why would any woman want to bother with me?

**A:** If you enjoy wallowing in self-pity, you are hardly fit for any kind of relationship. People sense your inner pain, your feelings of worthlessness, and for the most part find it distressing, even repellent. When you're finally ready to pull yourself together, then you can take measures to remedy your situation, and your state of mind will improve dramatically.

Rest assured that there are all too many women who feel as badly about themselves as you do. Perhaps when you have gained some skill at solving your own problems, you can use your expertise to help one of these unfortunates.

**Q:** I've been turned down by so many women for dates because I'm not tall and handsome. Help!

**A:** It is unfortunately true that some women will not go out with a man who is too . . . short, fat, young, old, ugly, whatever. These women lack certain essential human qualities - depth of character, common sense, maturity, compassion. Such women all too often end up hooked up with a good-looking, brain-damaged abuser.

Keep searching, and you'll find a compassionate, intelligent woman who values you for your own personal qualities, a woman who has learned to distinguish the fundamental from the superficial, a woman truly worthy of you.

**Q:** I think I'm a pretty good guy, and my friends tell me I'd be an ideal 'catch' for any woman. So why do I have so much trouble getting a date?



**A:** You may be looking in the wrong places. It sounds as if the women in your immediate surroundings might not be particularly suitable for you. Perhaps they are too young, too superficial, or just on a different wavelength. A more mature woman, one with some depth and life experience, would more likely appreciate what you have to offer. Consider, then, being a bit more flexible in your selection criteria. Give priority to personality and mutual compatibility, rather than how good she looks on your arm.

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

Samuel Beckett

**Q:** How do I get over a failed relationship?

**A:** It takes time . . . months, often a year or more. You have suffered a heavy loss and need to grieve.

Later, perhaps much later, you will find someone else. A new relationship is the best antidote to the pain of a broken one.

**Q:** I'm 48 years old and newly divorced. How do I reenter the dating game?

**A:** Cautiously, and with no particular sense of urgency. Considering your level of experience and maturity, you should have few problems meeting eligible women in the 35 - 55 year-old range. The difficulty comes if you make a fool of yourself chasing after much younger "trophy" girlfriends, but you've outgrown that (haven't you?).

**Q:** I'm 15 years old. How do I enter the dating game?

**A:** Cautiously, and with no particular sense of urgency. At your age, it's all about making mistakes and learning from them. Don't take rejection personally (no one is keeping score). Look for a girl who is an "outsider", just like you.

**Q:** How do I get the phone number of a woman I'd like to know better?

**A:** Of course, there is always the telephone book, but the point is to get her to voluntarily give you the number. She needs to get to know you well enough to trust you before she can feel comfortable giving you an entry into her life.

In the earliest stages of a hoped-for relationship, you can only be friendly, kind, supportive, and, most important, trustworthy. Don't push her for a phone number or, for that matter, any other personal

information until she indicates that she is ready. When she wants to know more about you, then she will be more than willing to share details about herself.

**Q:** How do I get a woman to call me? I'm too shy to make the first call myself.

**A:** This problem reduces to three subtasks.

- Getting your phone number to her.

This can be arranged by giving out your business card or even just in having your number available publicly, as in phone, professional, or business directories.

More cleverly, you might lend her this terrific book you've just read, a book that just happens to have your number printed on the bookplate.

- Motivating her to call you. She might if...

She is attracted to you.

She wants to get to know you better.

You are a sympathetic listener, and she needs someone to confide in.

She needs something from you.

- Giving her a face-saving excuse to call you.

She might have a work-related question.

You may be in a position to help her out with a personal problem.

She may want to return that terrific book you lent her.

Working out the details of the above is left as an "exercise for the reader."

**Q:** I placed a personal ad, based on a template found in [chapter 7](#), and a woman responded . . . but I don't know what's expected of me now. I feel like running away and hiding. Why did I ever let myself get talked into doing this?

**A:** Time for some personal growth. You may not yet be ready for a relationship. First, you need to get to the point that you are comfortable in a woman's company. Then, learn to communicate with her, so you can find out what the two of you have in common, what interests you share.

Be totally upfront and honest with the woman who responded to your ad. Let her know that you are a rank beginner at this sort of thing, and that she will have to take the lead here. If you are lucky, she will turn out to be a patient and compassionate teacher.

**Q:** I've known this woman for a short while, and we've even talked on the phone several times. I think she likes me, but how can I be sure?

**A:** At this point, you can't. Asking her straight out about her feelings

could be premature. She might not even be sure of her feelings for you yet. "Testing" her or playing "mind games" would almost certainly offend her and ruin any chances you have. Be patient, and let things develop at their own speed. You might send her a humorous card or buy her an inexpensive trinket to show how much you value her friendship.

**Q:** I have known a certain woman for quite some time now, and we are very good friends. We can talk about almost everything and have shared fun times and much laughter. At this point, I would like us to become more than just friends. I want to get much closer to her. What's the best strategy?

**A:** Don't press the issue. If ever she becomes interested in you in a romantic sense, she'll definitely let you know it. Due to the dynamics of the situation, you absolutely should wait for her to make the first move toward greater intimacy. An option you have is to make yourself just a bit less available to her. She may or may not take the hint, but in any case there is no need to let your impatience or impulsiveness spoil a beautiful friendship.

**Q:** Should I bring my date flowers?

**A:** It's considered "old fashioned" to show up at her door with a bouquet of flowers, but it could easily earn you a warm kiss, or at the very least a radiant smile. Little courtesies such as this show respect and give her something to remember you by the morning after.

**Q:** This is only the second date and I'm just getting to know the woman, when she hits me with all these *personal* questions like how I feel about marriage and children, what plans I've made for my career, and whether I believe in commitment. What's the deal?

**A:** So, subtlety is not her "strong suit". Could you live with that? Obviously, she has some feelings for you (or designs on you) already, or she would not have taken the risk of asking personal questions. You can consider it an intrusion or a compliment, as you choose. Consider, also, that she has given you an opening to ask personal questions about her.

Alternately, you could simply tell her, "Miranda, I like you a lot, but I'm just not ready for this yet. We need to get to know each other better before I'd feel comfortable letting down the shields totally and delving much more deeply into our personal affairs."

**Q:** I value my privacy, but my new girlfriend is beginning to ask questions about my personal life. How do I handle it without offending her?

**A:** "Cecilia, I understand and respect your need to know more about me. You feel vulnerable, or maybe worried about wasting your time with a potentially unsuitable partner.

"Let me reassure you that I'm not a jerk. You can trust your instincts about that. Understand, though, that at this early stage of our relationship, discussing the intimate details of my life feels intrusive. If and when we get to know each other a little better - and let's do so the traditional way, in small steps, slowly - then you'll find most or all your questions answered in the natural progression of things."

**Q:** At what point in the relationship do we hold hands? When are we expected to kiss?

**A:** When she's ready. Usually, by the second or third (or sometimes twentieth) date, if she likes you more than a little, if she is starting to get the "warm fuzzies" for you, then touching and physical displays of affection come about spontaneously, without planning or forethought.

**Q:** I'm inexperienced. I've never even kissed a woman and I'm afraid to try. At some point, I guess it'll be expected of me. How do I go about learning to kiss?

**A:** Kiss softly, not sloppily. Match the pressure of her lips on yours. Let the woman set the pace and teach you.

Be honest with her. Let her know you need some "handholding" in this matter. If she has good feeling about you, she'll be glad to show you the way.

**Q:** I've had a long-distance relationship with this woman for some time now. We're finally ready to meet in person, and frankly I'm terrified.

**A:** If the two of you can get past those first few awkward moments, things will probably work out. As you get off the plane, wave jauntily, hurry toward her, press into her hands that silly stuffed bear you bought in the gift shop, and give her a warm hug. "My gosh, it's good to see you finally, Mary Alice. Let's get out of this horrible place so we can sit down and talk."

**Q:** I hear about finding girlfriends on the Internet all the time. Why doesn't it work for me?

**A:** The Internet, with all its associated high-tech gimmickry, with its e-mail and Instant Messaging, all this does indeed facilitate sending words and pictures back and forth. Unfortunately, it does nothing to actually dissolve the barriers between people. Here is where

old-fashioned communications skills still count.

We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate.

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

**Q:** There's a woman I see every morning on the bus, riding to work. We always say hello, and sometimes even get into short conversations. I think she enjoys my company, and I finally worked up the courage to slip a humorous "friendship" greeting card into her hand last week. The following morning she had a twinkle in her eye, but otherwise treated me just the same. Since then, nothing much has changed - we still say hello on the bus and sometimes talk a bit longer there. What do I do?

**A:** You've given it your best shot, fellow. If she wants anything deeper than a casual on-the-go relationship, it's up to her. Continue to make her morning commute pleasant and even share a few laughs now and then.

**Q:** Is it all right to share the costs of a date, to "go dutch"?

**A:** You can confidently expect to pay for the first couple of dates. After that, the payment arrangements may be worked out by consensus.

**Q:** I just "invested" \$60 taking this woman out to a show and treating her to a dinner in an upscale restaurant. I think I'm entitled to be treated nicely afterward, in fact, I insist on it.

**A:** You are entitled to exactly nothing. Dating is a craps shoot at best, and a woman, any woman, always has the right to say no at any point in a relationship. Insisting on your "prerogatives" could get you slapped with a rape charge, which you would, in fact, richly deserve.

**Q:** I'm not the classic macho type that women reputedly respond to. Would I attract more women if I learned the moves and 'faked it'?

**A:** Do you look forward to "faking it," to acting out a role for the rest of your life? How would you feel if a woman actually did fall in love with your masquerade, your false front, rather than with the real person inside you?

This is a variant on the age-old question of why many women seem to prefer "heels" to "nice" guys. That particular issue is dealt with in more detail in [The Romantic Predator](#) sidebar and elsewhere.

**Q:** The woman I'm with likes me a lot as a friend and confidante, but she seems haunted by memories of her previous abusive boyfriend. She says I'm just too nice for her to think of me as a romantic partner. Maybe she doesn't consider me enough of a "real man" to take seriously.

**A:** This woman has a big problem. She's attracted to abusive men, so-called "alpha males." The bad news is that you can't fix this. The good news is that it's not your job. Find another girlfriend.

**Q:** I have a couple of platonic friendships with women, just as HMW recommends ("[Just Friends](#)"). While these relationships are a comfort at times and often do help relieve my loneliness, I can't help feeling they are holding me back from finding a woman I can be passionate with. I seem to be stuck in a rut.

**A:** Getting stuck in a rut is a common human dilemma. It's all too easy to settle into a comforting, but unproductive behavior pattern, whether it be drinking, watching television, or just plain wasting time with acquaintances. Your platonic relationships are not the problem, it's your own inertia that is holding you back. Do something to shake up your social life - go out and meet more people, place a personal ad, go folk dancing. At the same time, continue cultivating your existing relationships.

**Q:** Every woman I'm attracted to turns out to have a boyfriend already. I'm in my early 20's and sometimes it feels like there must be three single guys for every eligible woman out there.

**A:** The 20's truly can be a difficult time for men. There seem to be more eligible men than women . . . But, toward the late 30's and into the 40's, the "balance of power" shifts dramatically. Now, single men have become a hot item, and women of that age are starting to get desperate. Enlarge your horizons and try dating older women.

**Q:** I can't seem to find the right woman. They're either too young, too old, not good-looking enough . . .

**A:** If you find a woman who shares your beliefs and values, who enjoys talking with and listening to you, who can share laughter with you, and who is capable of loving you - what more do you want? If you find this in a woman who is 10 or 15 years older than you, and you turn her down because of the age difference, then you can continue to dwell in the bitterly cold realm of unrealistic expectations and unfulfilled dreams.

Obviously, there are some things you can't compromise on - values (honesty, integrity, honor), a minimum level of intelligence, and a willingness to accept you as you are. Pretty much everything else - age, cultural background, physical appearance - is negotiable.

**Q:** How will I know she's the right one for me?

**A:** You might just as well ask, "How will she know you're the right one for her?" A relationship is a partnership, and if things "click", you'll both know it (though not necessarily at the same time). Be patient, sometimes it takes months or even years to get to that point.

**Q:** The woman I've been going with can't seem to decide between me and another guy. What can I do to become the sole object of her affections?

**A:** Help her decide. Drop her like a hot potato.

**Q:** There's this woman I just can't live without. We know each other only casually, but just seeing her face in the distance inflames me, drives me wild. I don't even know what she thinks of me, but I fear I've already slipped over the edge - I'm totally, madly in love with her. What can I do?

**A:** Nothing . . . except displaying some common sense and self-discipline. Yes, you can live without her (and quite well, too). Pining away for a woman you scarcely know is ridiculous, the plot of a bad gothic novel. Absolutely, you will survive the experience, and, years later, laugh at yourself.

**Q:** The woman I'm involved with can't seem to take me seriously in a romantic way. She says I remind her more of a younger brother than a lover. What can I do to excite her passion for me?

**A:** It's possible that the timing is wrong in this relationship, that you're not in a period of your life where you can sustain a passionate relationship with this particular woman. Then again, maybe she's not the right one for you. In any case, your best option might be to accept a platonic relationship with her and to seek passionate fulfillment elsewhere.

**Q:** This woman I've been going with for a couple of months drives me crazy. She's moody, alternately hot and cold, sometimes loving, sometimes distant. Maybe she's just not yet sure how she feels about me, but I have a hard time dealing with it. Will her behavior toward me stabilize after our relationship gets on a firmer footing?

**A:** You can confidently expect her to continue to drive you crazy for as long as you remain with her. Yes, people are capable of changing, but as a practical matter only a very few actually do.



**Q:** I'm totally gone for this woman, but she seems to be just toying with me. Sometimes she's affectionate, other times she treats me like dirt. Is there anything I can I do to make her love me, or am I wasting my time?

**A:** Turn around, walk away, and don't look back.

**Q:** If a women does not respond to my overtures within a reasonable period of time, should I "cut my losses" and just walk away?

**A:** Essentially, yes. You've been patient, very patient, but still she does not return your affections, and she's made it very clear that she does not feel the same way about you that you feel about her. It's an unbalanced relationship and an unproductive situation.

Somewhere out there, a loving woman is waiting for you to find her, and meanwhile here you are running after someone who is dwindling in the distance. Stop wasting your time.

**Q:** I must be hooked up with a "Rules" woman. She expects me to take the initiative all the time, but seldom shows me any affection in return. I guess I'm supposed to treat her like a queen, and for what? Her idea of a relationship is for me to be her lapdog.

**A:** A few years back, Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider wrote *The Rules: Time Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right*. The book counsels playing "hard to get" and using other manipulatory and underhanded strategems as a means of getting a marriage proposal. Naturally, it sold a zillion copies, no mean feat considering that the entire book could have been condensed into a 5-page pamphlet without any loss of essential content. All the same, the success of "The Rules" is inspirational. It demonstrates that literally anyone can produce a bestseller. You don't need talent, writing skill, or even much of anything to say.

So, kiddo, what should you do about your uncomfortable situation? Just use common sense. With so many other fine women out there, why waste your time on this turkey?

**The Rule for *HMW* readers:** If she's playing games with you, dump her. Immediately.

**Q:** Why do I feel my life will end if *she* does not return my affections and love me?

**A:** So, you need a relationship, someone loving you to find validation as a person, to give meaning to your life? You have so little sense of self-worth that your life is empty without someone to love?



The problem here is not your lack of a mate or lover, but your own feelings about yourself. Work on healing the hurt inside you, on becoming a healthy person, a *whole* person . . . rather than on seeking completion from a girlfriend. As you have already discovered, women are not attracted to you in your desperate hour of need. They sense the bleeding wound within you and run away.

**Q:** Just what do women want (in a relationship)?

**A:** While it's dangerous to generalize, some women have unrealistic, even fantasy-based expectations of what a relationship should be. On the one hand, they dream of a strong, dominant man who will "sweep them off their feet", and yet they want, they crave a warm, sensitive, caring lover who fulfills their emotional needs. To call this a contradiction is something of an understatement.



**Q:** Yes, but what do women really want?

**A:** Underneath it all, behind the veil of illusions and the clutter of everyday life . . . a woman wants someone to complete her, to fill the empty spaces, to listen and to care, to heal her loneliness. She wants to be appreciated, to receive strength, emotional support, and warmth. She wants someone to share her life with. She wants someone to care for and to love.

**Q:** Are men and women really all that different?

**A:** There are subtle, yet profound differences in the way men and women think. Consider, for example, that women are emotional in certain areas where men are logical, and vice versa. This leads to misunderstandings and worse, yet it is certainly possible to bridge the communications gap with enough patience, and yes, love.

**Q:** I'm not at all shy and have no problem meeting and forming relationships with women. Why should I read HMW?

**A:** A careful reading of this book will give you a better understanding of the dynamics of man/woman relationships. This could help you form deeper and more meaningful attachments with the women that you allegedly have no problem meeting.

**Q:** Could women benefit from reading HMW?

**A:** Definitely. Much of the advice in HMW is not gender-specific, and women (shy or otherwise) could learn quite a bit about how a shy man thinks and feels. For those women specifically attracted to shy men, HMW gives valuable insights on how to reach out to a man who is too shy to make the first move.

**Q:** The author seems to jumble up fact with (his own) opinion in this book. How do I separate the two?

**A:** When it comes to relationships, it's all opinion. Looking at it another way, everything the reader agrees with is fact, and everything else is opinion.

**Q:** Can social relationships be "hacked", played with and manipulated in the same sense that computer hardware and code may be?

**A:** To a surprising extent, yes. Remember, though, that people are just a bit more complex than video games, and that you're dealing with real live human beings here, women who suffer when hurt, just like you.

**Q:** I'm a complete "klutz" when it comes to relating to people. If I study the advice in this book and work hard at becoming more "social", at what point will I be ready to form relationships with women?

**A:** If you take to heart the lessons of "HOW-2 Meet Women", and of life, and gradually learn social skills - then at some point you will pass an almost imperceptible dividing line or threshold. Relating to people in general, and to women in particular will become almost intuitive, if still tricky at times. It is a long and difficult road, and may well require more patience and determination than you think yourself capable

of. If you are truly serious about it, though, you will make it your life's work. And triumph.

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# Resources

## Internet

### Relationship Links

[Cupids Network](#)

[SingleSites.com](#)

[Singlesstop](#)

[The PeopleNet DisAbility DateNet Home Page](#)

Dating info for people with disabilities.

In real love you want the other person's good. In romantic love you want the other person.

Margaret Anderson

### Advice

Advice is what we ask for  
when we already know the answer  
but wish we didn't.

Erica Jong

### [Dating Advice for Geeks](#)

Brenda gives down to earth advice for the lovelorn. The "Pathetic Series", about "dates from hell" and "high school horrors" is, by itself, worth the price of admission.

### [Dating Advice](#)

Brenda's other dating site.

### [Spring Street](#)

Clever advice from a New Yorker on the subject of personal ads

### [Single's Coach](#)

Nina Atwood, licensed therapist, answers questions and gives the kind of conventional, no-nonsense advice you would expect from a professional.

### ["Sex Tips For Geeks"](#)

Eric ("esr") Raymond, übergeek and Linux guru, gives relationship advice.

## [alt.romance FAQ](#)

Collected wisdom from the participants of the [alt.romance newsgroup](#). Some of it actually is wise, some funny, some a crock.

## [The "involuntary celibacy" site](#)

Much good advice for those who are celibate, but don't wish to remain so.

## [The Encyclopedia of Mental Health: Shyness](#)

A somewhat technical essay containing useful tips, plus news about some clinical methods of dealing with shyness.

**The only thing to do with good advice is pass it on. It is never any use to oneself.**

Oscar Wilde

## [Web Rings For Singles](#)

## [Siren's Romance Ring](#) [Singles OnLine Web Ring](#)

## [Pen Pals](#)

## [Penpal List Sites](#) [Bonnie's Penpal Directory](#)

The Letter Exchange  
PO Box 2930  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

This well-run snailmail-based penpal club had been going strong for a decade and a half. Its purpose was long-distance friendship, not the forging of romantic bonds (though that had been known to happen). This organization would have been highly appropriate for single males learning to make and sustain conventional friendships with both men and women. Subscriptions were \$22/year for 3 issues. The current issue would cost \$9, and a sample back issue was \$1. Answering ads was free, but there was a per word charge for placing them.

**Obituary:** The Letter Exchange printed its final issue in the fall of 2000, and totally shut down operations in March of 2001. It is truly unfortunate that this exceptional organization has shut down. There is still a place for a traditional by-mail penpal club, but what will take the place of this one?

## [Dating Services](#)

## [Single Book Lovers](#)

For literate persons who are lonely.

Any listings in this category have been included because they fill 'special needs' and seem reasonably priced. This is not a softening of the harsh criticism levied against for-pay dating services in [Chapter 12](#), nor is it necessarily an endorsement of the products and services listed.

## [General Info](#)

## [A Brief Guide to Social Newsgroups and Mailing Lists](#)

Dave Taylor gives an extensive, if uncritical, rundown of the singles newsgroups and mailing lists.

## Size Acceptance Organizations (For admirers of fat women)

[ISAA](#)

[NAAFA](#)

## Other Resources

### Folk Dancing

#### [Folk Dance Association](#)

### Literature

**Allen, Jeff, *Quickstart to Social Dancing*, QQS Publications, 1998, ISBN 0-965-44231-4, \$19.95.**

A gentle introduction to the art of social dancing. Note that the actual learning experience necessarily still takes place on the dance floor.

**Anderson, Robert, *Tea and Sympathy*.**

Controversial play about the difficult coming-of-age of a boy who is scorned by his peers for being "unmasculine," and the efforts of a sympathetic older woman to help him overcome his self-loathing. The movie version dilutes the effect, despite some excellent performances.

"When you speak of this, and you will, please be kind."

**Balzac, *Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes [Scenes From a Courtesan's Life]*. [Out of print]**

Written by the master of the French romance, this one is available on-line in an English translation from [Project Gutenberg](#). Gives a perceptive and humorous view of the intrigues and amours in the *haute monde*, not to mention a fine characterization of one of the most memorable villains in all of literature.

**Berman, Morris, *The Reenchantment of the World*, Bantam Books, 1984, ISBN 0-553-24171-0.**

A new, or rather, ancient way of looking at consciousness and reality, and of our relationship to the world.

**Brophy, Brigid, *Flesh*, 1962. [Out of print]**

Heartwarming story of the love of two misfits.

**Burdick, Eugene, *The Ninth Wave*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956. [out of print]**

An astute analysis of human weakness. Deep down, are we all motivated by just anger and fear?

**Byrd, Richard E., *Alone*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1938 (recently reprinted).**

The arctic explorer's classic on the rigors of being alone, of relying fully on one's self. The definitive antidote to loneliness.

Cassidy, John and Rimbeaux, Waller: *Juggling for the Complete Klutz / With Block Beanbags*, Klutz Press, 1994, ISBN 0-932-59200-7, \$10.95.

Learn juggling, so you can impress people at parties and other social occasions.

Chasman, Deborah and Catherine Jhee: *Here Lies My Heart, Essays on Why We Marry, Why We Don't, and What We Find There*, Beacon Press, 1999, ISBN 0807062170, \$15.00.

An anthology of essays by various authors on why men and women find living together so troublesome.

de la Clos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuse [Dangerous Liaisons]*. [out of print]

One of the earliest of the romantic novels, piercing and wickedly funny. If you can't get the book, see the movie, starring Glenn Close and John Malkovitch.

Conway, Flo and Jim Siegelman, *Snapping (America's Epidemic of Sudden Personality Change)*, Dell, 1979, ISBN 0-440-57970-8. [Out of print]

How terribly vulnerable we are to brainwashing and manipulation.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, *FLOW: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper & Row, 1990.

A new look at that elusive quality, happiness.

Durrell, Lawrence, *The Alexandria Quartet (Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive, Clea)*, 1957-60, Penguin, 1991, ISBN 0-140-15317-9 [reissue].

The full spectrum of passion and its messy byproducts. Plot and counterplot. Exquisite writing.

"Who invented the human heart, I wonder. Tell me, and then show me the place where he was hanged."

Farmer, Philip José, *The Lovers*, Ballantine, 1961

[expanded from the original novelette in "Startling Stories", 1952]. [Out of print]

A strange twist to a man's love for a creature he believes is a woman.

Fowles, John, *The Magus*, Little, Brown & Co., 1965. [Out of print]

Why modern man is crippled in his capacity for love.

Hesse, Hermann, *Narziss und Goldmund (Narcissus and Goldmund)*, 1930.

Set in medieval Europe, this is the story of two friends. One chooses the austere life of a scholar, the other the pursuit of passion and sensual pleasures.

Hesse, Hermann, *Steppenwolf*, 1927, S. Fischer Verlag AG, (English translation reissued 1990 by Henry Holt, ISBN 0805012478).

" . . . the images of many women floated by me with an unearthly fragrance like moist sea flowers on the surface of the water, women whom I had loved, desired and sung, whose love I had seldom won and seldom striven to win."

Hillman, James, *The Soul's Code, In Search of Character and Calling*, Random House, 1996, ISBN 0-679-44522-6.

A brilliant meditation on how fate affects our lives, and on how to fulfill our destiny with dignity.

Lanier, Sidney, his poetry, especially "*The Marshes of Glynn*".

Sensuous imagery, just right for reading aloud to your lover. Available on-line from [Project Gutenberg](http://www.gutenberg.org).

Lawrence, D.H., *Women In Love*.

Why women love us, and do they really?

Also see the excellent Ken Russell movie, with Glenda Jackson's memorable performance.

Lefkowitz, Bernard, *Our Guys*, Univ. Of California Press, 1997, ISBN 0-965-059496.

The depravity of middle-class "jock" culture. Why predatory males are idealized.

**LeGuin, Ursula, *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas* (short story).**

The extravagant price people are willing to pay for *the good life*.

**Mann, Thomas, *Joseph and His Brothers* [*Joseph und seine Brüder*], vol. 3, Alfred A. Knopf, 1938. [out of print]**

The classic tale of female obsession, biblical style. The mad lust of Potiphar's wife.

**Mackay, Charles, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, Richard Bentley, 1841 [reprinted in 1932 and after by L.C. Page & Co.].**

Also available on-line from [Project Gutenberg](#).

Still the definitive work on group psychology and mass mania.

**Maugham, W. Somerset, *Of Human Bondage*.**

Available on-line from [Project Gutenberg](#).

The classic about obsessive love, and what it takes to heal from it.

**McIntosh, J.T., *Snow White and the Giants*, Avon, 1968. [out of print]**

Otherwise mediocre SF novel that makes fascinating speculations about [the knack](#) of getting women to fall hard.

**McKenna, Richard, "*Hunter, Come Home*", novelette (published in *A Century of Great Short Science Fiction*, Dell, 1965. [out of print])**

On the meaning of masculinity, courage . . . and sensitivity and tenderness.

**Mountain Dreamer, Oriah, *The Invitation*, HarperCollins, 1999, ISBN 0-06-251585-3.**

Communicating with others, and the journey to self-acceptance.

**Mumey, Jack and Cynthia Tinsley, *Age Difference Relationships: Finding Happiness With an Older or Younger Love*, Fairview Press, 1993, ISBN 0-925-19065-9.**

**Nelms, Henning, *Thinking With a Pencil*, Ten Speed Press, 1981, ISBN 0-89815-052-3. [out of print]**

Learning the venerable art of drawing for the purpose of entertaining others at social events, and to see things from a different perspective.

**Ostrander, Sheila and Lynn Schroeder, *Superlearning*, Delacorte, 1979, ISBN 0-440-08354-0.**

Developing human potential through classical music. Anticipated *The Mozart Effect*.

**Pickow, Peter and Jason Shulman, *Play Harmonica : Master the Basics from the Beginning to Advanced Techniques*, 1997, Music Sales Corp, ISBN 0-825-61594-1.**

Learn to play this popular instrument, so you will attract favorable attention at parties.

**Rimbaud, Arthur, *Le Bateau Ivre* (*The Drunken Boat*), poem.**

A delirious fantasy of the senses by a late-Nineteenth-Century sensualist.

**Sheckley, Robert, "*The Language of Love*", short story, (first published in *Galaxy magazine*, 1957).**

Obsessing on the mechanics of love leads to a dead end.

**Stendhal, *The Scarlet and the Black*.**

Available on-line (in French) from [Project Gutenberg](#).

Counterpoint to Balzac, and possibly even better. Young man, making his way in the world, brought down by a grand passion.

**Stevens, Wallace, his poetry, especially *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* and *The Emperor of Ice Cream*.**



**Sturgeon, Theodore, *Baby, It's You* (short story, 1969). \***

All the failed relationships that ever were, in a nutshell. Also, see the song of the same title, below.

**Sturgeon, Theodore, *It Wasn't Syzygy* (SF, short story, 1948). \***

On the dangers of defining yourself by the woman you love.

**Sturgeon, Theodore, *A Saucer of Loneliness* (SF, short story, 1953). \***

"There is in certain living souls  
A quality of loneliness unspeakable,  
So great it must be shared..."

**Tolstoy, Leo, *Anna Karenina*.**

Available on-line from [Project Gutenberg](#).

Tragic obsessive love of an older woman for a younger man.

**Trevarian, *Shibumi*, Ballantine Books, 1979, ISBN 0-345-28585-9. [out of print]**

Well-written, but dated satirical espionage thriller. Makes some interesting points about the art of lovemaking.

**Vance, Jack, *Green Magic* (novelette, 1963).**

Available on-line at [Infinity Plus](#).

Wizardry, seduction, and the importance of subtlety.

**Vizinczey, Stephan, *In Praise of Older Women*, University of Chicago Press, 1990 (reprint), ISBN 0-226-85886-7.**

A delightfully funny coming-of-age story that captures some essential truths about age difference relationships.

**Wakefield, Dan, *Scoring*, Doubleday, 1972. [out of print]**

Young Jewish boy on the make learns about life and love, yet still manages to laugh at himself.

**Wilson, Richard, *Mother to the World* (award-winning SF novelette, 1968).**

Sweet, low-key "end of the world" relationship between a caring man and a mildly retarded, but loving woman.

**Wouk, Herman, *Marjorie Morningstar*, Little Brown & Co. (1992 reissue), ISBN 0-316-95513-2.**

"Customs of courtship vary greatly in different times and places, but the way the thing happens to be done here and now always seems the only natural way to do it."

**Wylie, Philip, *The Disappearance*, Pocket Books, 1958. [out of print]**

What would happen to men if all the women in the world suddenly disappeared, and to women without the men?

\* Collected in *E Pluribus Unicorn*, which, like the rest of Sturgeon's works, has been out of print for decades. North Atlantic Books is in the process of reprinting his stories in a proposed 10 volume set.

## Film

***American Gigolo* (Paul Schrader, starring Richard Gere)**

Ostensibly about the sleazy world of a male "escort", nevertheless gives some insight into what women expect in a dream lover.

***Annie Hall* (Woody Allen)**

Nice Jewish boy meets crazy, mixed-up shiksa.

***Damage* (Louis Malle)**

Unbridled lust wreaks havoc.

***Jules and Jim* (Truffaut)**

Your basic love triangle. Both funny and sad, in a touching sort of way.

***Le Filou (The Pickpocket)* [Robert Bresson]**

You have to find yourself before you can find anyone else.

***Marty* (from the play by Paddy Chayefsky)**

The classic about love between shy people. A "must see."

***Play It Again, Sam* (Woody Allen)**

How not to be Humphrey Bogart.

***Play Misty* (Clint Eastwood)**

A woman violently obsessed with the object of her desires. This predecessor to *Fatal Attraction* easily ranks as Eastwood's finest effort.

***Room at the Top* (Simone Signoret, Lawrence Harvey)**

Upwardly striving guy abandons his true love for a rich girl. From the book by John Braine.

***Shadowlands* (Anthony Hopkins, Debra Winger)**

Shy writer C.S. Lewis and his tragic love for the brash Joy Gresham.

***A Taste of Honey* (Rita Tushingham)**

Tender yearning, not quite love.

***The Touch [Berörungen]* (Ingmar Bergman)**

Obsessive passion destroys a woman's life.

## Software

***Man Enough*, by Tsunami / Time Warner** [no longer available for retail sale]

"Here's the deal. Five women . . . and you.  
They want it all: conversation, adventure and style."

Written by a TV weatherman, this computer game allegedly tests conversational skills in dating/mating situations. As a period piece of pop culture schlock, it regurgitates all the prevalent stereotypes and clichés.

"Pasta is quite sensual."  
"On her own terms..."  
"Waited sooo long..."

If you can find it at a yard sale, it's probably worth a dollar or two, if only for laughs.

## Art

Art is not a mirror held up to reality

**But a hammer with which to shape it.**

Bertolt Brecht

### ***The Kiss*, by Auguste Rodin**

Inspiring generations of lovers, this sculpture-in-bronze expresses the power and the beauty of joining one's heart and soul to another. On display at the Musée Rodin in Paris, and on-line at [Carol Gerten's page](#).

## **Music**

**Music heard so deeply  
That it is not heard at all,  
But you are the music  
While the music lasts**

T.S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages"

### **Pachelbel's *Canon***

Overused, but still everybody's favorite.

### **Franz Biber's *Sonata à Sept***

Hypnotically simple, yet charming.

### **Charpentier's *Te Deum***

Liturgical, but utterly moving and magnificently sensual all the same.

### **Rameau's *Gavotte and Variations***

One of the two most sensuous harpsichord pieces ever written.

### **Padre Antonio Soler's *Fandango Suite***

The other one of the two most sensuous harpsichord pieces ever written.

### ***The Wedge*, from J.S. Bach's *Toccatà in F***

As played by Virgil Fox at the organ, it will set both you and your girlfriend on fire, guaranteed.

### ***Schlummert Ein* (Slumber Soft), from the *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*, by J.S. Bach, as sung by Elly Ameling, of course.**

Finest known example of the art of the lullaby, and wonderful for singing your loved one to sleep.

### **Vivaldi's *Gloria* (RV 589 in D major)**

Liturgical music, but uplifting, energizing, even sensual.

### **Vivaldi's *Nullo in Mondo Pax Sincera***

Achingly beautiful aria.

### ***Au Fond du Temple Saint* Duet, as sung by Jussi Björling and Robert Merrill**

Goes down like honey.

### **Karl Orff's *Carmina Burana***

The ultimate in erotic music.

For opera buffs

***Don Giovanni*, by Mozart**

Sublime music and even an interesting plot, but after a while you find yourself rooting for Leporello.

***Les Histoires d'Hoffmann* (Tales of Hoffmann), by Jacques Offenbach**

Cutesy but topical libretto about a shy scholar pursuing love.

***Liebeshod* (Love Death) from *Tristan und Isolde*, by Wagner**

To die for, literally.

***Madame Butterfly*, by Puccini**

***Peleas et Melisande*, by Debussy**

And for something a bit more modern

***Baby, It's You*, by the Shirelles (1961)**

The classiest of the '60's "girl groups."

***Then He Kissed Me*, The Crystals (1962?)**

Another '60's "girl group" . . . ah nostalgia.

***All Over The World*, Françoise Hardy (1965)**

Back then, she was the teenage boy's heartthrob (long blonde hair, thigh-high vinyl boots, and, oh, that voice).

***Older Women Are Beautiful Lovers*, sung by Ronnie McDowell, written by Jamie O'Hara (1981)**

Unusual Country/Western, with very subversive lyrics.

***Come Softly To Me*, The Fleetwoods (1959)**

S-l-o-w cheek-to-cheek dancing music, and daydream-inspiring to listen to.

***Underneath the Mango Tree* (1962)**

Lyrics by Monty Norman, sung by Ursula Andress in the movie *Dr. No*.

Cute, oh-so cute calypso ditty.

***At Seventeen*, Janis Ian (1974)**

Girls suffer heartbreak and loneliness, too.

**Joan Baez, singing *Diamonds and Rust***

**Judy Collins' masterful renditions of Leonard Cohen's *Suzanne*  
and, of course, Buffy St. Marie's "Clouds"**

**Leonard Cohen's own *Marianne***

***The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*, Roberta Flack (1972)**

They don't sing them like this any more.

**Marlene Dietrich, singing *Lili Marlene***

That husky voice evoking such world weariness . . .

## Charles Aznavour's *She*

"Elle, peut etre la beauté ou la bete . . . "

Haunting music and lyrics, composed and sung by one of the best male singers of the age.

**Information is not knowledge**

**Knowledge is not wisdom**

**Wisdom is not truth**

**Truth is not beauty**

**Beauty is not love**

**Love is not music**

**Music is the best.**

**Frank Zappa**

**Table of Contents**

# For Immediate Release

## A Magic Formula to Conquer Shyness and Become Attractive to Women?

The bad news is that there exists no such formula. The good news is that you don't need one. You can learn to live with and make the most of your shyness, and yes, get girlfriends too.

HOW-2 Meet Women: The Shy Man's Guide To Relationships is a book for every man who has ever felt a lump in his throat when he approached a woman. It is for the socially inept and the lonely. It is for the man who wants to change his luck with women - and turn his life around. It is for every guy who believes in self-improvement.

The author of HOW-2 Meet Women has graciously consented to answer a few questions about himself and the book.

**Q: What are your credentials for writing a book of this nature?**

**A: Credentials? We don' need no steenking credentials.**

I had to take Intro to Psychology twice to learn what makes dogs salivate, but was still clueless about human motivations. I subsequently obtained an advanced degree in Living-Day-To-Day Technology from the School of Hard Knocks, and that absolutely qualifies me to make authoritative-sounding pronouncements about Happiness, Fulfillment, and The Meaning Of Life.

Actually, my writing credits include a file encryption article in "Electronic Design" magazine, in addition to the "Advanced Bash-Scripting Guide" and "Software-Building and Installation HOWTO" for the Linux Documentation Project. A long, long shy bachelorhood, during which I made every misstep described in the book, not to mention countless others, certifies me as a Grand Master, Magister, and Mentor of dating and relationships.

**Q: So, why did you write this particular book?**

**A: The book needed to be written. There was nothing much available for specifically helping a shy man find a girlfriend. I wrote the very book I so desperately needed at age 21, a down-to-earth guide to relating to women. The result is what I consider a benchmark in the literature, something every subsequent book on forming relationships will have to match to be taken seriously.**

**Q: What do you find most gratifying about readers' response to the book?**

**A: Several readers have informed me that the book helped them find a long-term relationship. Quite a number of others told me that reading it made sense of their dating and relationship experiences. This**

means it's changing the world for the better, if only a teeny bit. How many money-making bestsellers can claim as much?

**Q: Isn't it a bit unusual to use a technical/engineering approach in a self-help book?**

**A: No more so than the usual psychologizing. The book emphasizes the practical skills needed to interact with women. Only a bare minimum of underlying theory is necessary. This book is based on the not-so-unlikely premise that a functional relationship with a woman is as intricate and awe-inspiring a structure as, say, a well-designed suspension bridge or an elegant digital logic circuit. It follows that the skills necessary to create and sustain such a liaison can be codified and taught in bite-sized chunks. I've said precisely that in the afterword of the book.**

**Q: You don't seem to have much respect for psychology in the book, and you favor practical advice over theory.**

**A: A man lacks a roof over his head. What does he need more - some loose boards, a keg of nails, and a hammer . . . or a lecture on the principles of architecture?**

**Q: How are shy people handicapped in our society?**

**A: Beyond causing the obvious difficulties in making friends and forming romantic attachments, shyness impacts career and social mobility. Shyness can lead to depression and despair. It can feed into feelings of inferiority, and make it difficult to handle even the most mundane social interactions. All the same, shyness is not a disease or a defect. It is a character trait, and a perfectly acceptable one at that. Shyness is far less annoying than such mannerisms as excessive talkativeness, pettiness, or being overly fastidious.**

**Q: What can a shy person do about it? How about seeking professional help?**

**A: Psychologists have of late created imaginative new categories for all manners of perceived social disabilities. There is even a name for what is allegedly behind social ineptness and having difficulty relating to others - "dyssemia". It means the inability to interpret non-verbal cues. Young children can receive treatment for this, and adults with the "disorder" have the options of paying for expensive therapy and expensive drugs or . . . buying expensive self-help books.**

**Q: Is it reasonable to assert that an awkward, socially inept nerd can actually develop people skills to the point of being successful in attracting women just by reading a book? (Pardon my skepticism.)**

**A: Can the relationship game be all that much more complex than, say, hacking the Linux kernel <grin>? Seriously, the book is intended as an inspiration, a springboard toward what will be a lifetime job of learning social skills.**

**Q: What if a shy, socially inept man uses the techniques in the book to get a woman interested in him, but doesn't know what to do next? Suppose, for example, that I meet a woman, using one of the personal ad templates in [chapter 7](#), but I'm not ready yet, and all of a sudden I'm in over my head. She's blown away by the ad, and wants to get to know me, but just the thought of going forward from here makes me break out into a cold sweat. I'm nervous, tongue-tied, and frankly terrified.**

**A: I've received reports of this very thing happening. It is certainly best not to proceed too fast on the program outlined in HMW, not to skip ahead to the "interesting" parts. One step at a time. Learn to deal with the causes of your own loneliness and to develop "people skills," to interrelate with other persons in ordinary social settings. You likewise need enough self-confidence to be able to make a fool of yourself, to fumble around, to blunder, to learn from mistakes, to fall down and get back up. Only then will you be prepared for the complexities and responsibilities, for the pain and the pleasure, for the wild ride of having a girlfriend.**

**Shy guy, there's no need to rush. It took all your life to get where you are now, and a few more months of preparation is no great price to pay so that when you finally do get in a relationship, you get it right. For right now, explain to the woman that the ad puts forward your expressive, poetic side, but that the rest of you can't quite cope with a real live woman in a real live relationship. Tell her that for the moment, all you can handle is friendship.**

**Q: How can a shy man, even one who has acquired a fairly good set of social skills, compete with those who have been endowed with a natural talent for social interaction?**

**A: Those fortunate ones seemingly born with social skills tend to take them for granted, and their proficiency in dealing with their fellow humans reaches a plateau and levels out by adulthood. In other words, they stop learning after a certain point. Shy men, motivated by necessity, are all too conscious of the need to continue honing their skills, and they might well make a lifetime project out of this. (The methodical tortoise wins the race after the rabbit runs out of steam.)**

**Q: Isn't society based on a natural balance between "winners" and "losers"? If enough shy people learn to socialize, won't this throw things out of kilter and let loose chaos?**

**A: Putting shy men on a more even footing in the competition for lovers and mates can, in the long run, only improve the genetic heritage of the human race. (Shy people seem to be more intelligent on average than garrulous extroverts.) In an objective sense, this is part of the evolutionary arms race between predators and decent people, and any step taken toward equalizing matters is a blow for civilization.**

**Q: What age groups is the book appropriate for?**

**A: I targeted [HOW-2 Meet Women](#) at single males, from 16 on up. Though there is nothing in the book that would offend the average 12-year-old, it does require a certain level of emotional maturity to benefit from its teachings.**

**Q: Should readers of the book discuss it with their friends?**



**A: Certainly. Women seem quite good at forming discussion and support groups for their social problems, and it's time men learned from them. Sharing the knowledge with others will improve the general dating environment for all shy intelligent men. Hopefully, the methodology set forth in the book will help lower the payoff for manipulation and nastiness in relationships.**

**Q: There is certainly a need for a companion volume to help shy women meet men. Do you have any plans to write anything of this nature?**

**A: I have, as it happens, been asked to write just such a book, but have no plans to do so. Certain male writers, such as John Varley, can get into a woman's mind and write from the female point of view. I, unfortunately, seem to lack that particular talent.**

**Much of the content of HOW-2 Meet Women is gender neutral, and the advice for men mostly applies to women as well. Quite a number of women have, in fact, praised the book. I would certainly like women to read it, if only to familiarize themselves with seduction techniques in order to become more resistant to manipulation. If the book accomplishes nothing else, I hope it raises standards in the way men and women relate to each other.**

**Q: Why is there no mention of the actual mechanics of sex in the book?**

**A: It would be totally superfluous. An inexperienced shy man would learn little of any importance from a sex manual, in any case. Becoming a skilled lover is mostly a matter of experience. All it takes is patience, attention to the woman's feelings and needs, and a bit of imagination.**

**Q: You're harshly critical of certain groups. Doesn't this reveal a certain bias?**

**A: Yes, I attack predators of both sexes in the book, and in the process of revealing some of their dirty little secrets, but this hardly calls for an apology.**

**I likewise come down hard on "games-playing," and particularly on the women who practice this destructive behavior. In an ideal world, all the games-playing, manipulative women would end up with their male counterparts, and they could make a career of tormenting each other. In our own imperfect world, the best I can do is give decent men fair warning, so they know which types of women to avoid.**

**The case of the beautiful people is a bit more complex. Yes, my feelings toward this group lie somewhere between massive indifference and cosmic contempt. I certainly counsel shy men, for their own good, to stay away from this particular crowd. Why? Look at history. The Roaring Twenties had its own version of the "beautiful people", the flappers. These hedonists danced the night away, oblivious to the danger signals around them. The first high wind that came along, the Depression, blew them away. Our current crop of beautiful people and celeb-wannabes will most likely fare no better in coming times. What would any self-respecting shy man want with this bunch of losers?**

**In the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, it has become increasingly clear that social parasites are a luxury we can no longer afford. The "beautiful people" are not just passé and uncool, they are a dead weight and a burden on the rest of us.**

**Q: Why do you come down so hard on predators? What business of yours is it how other men treat women?**

**A: Predators give all of us a bad name. They make decent men ashamed to be part of the same species, much less the same sex. These sleazeballs are the dark underside of the human condition, the gangrene that infects a culture adoring money and power, the crawling things that slither out from under a rock.**

**Predators despoil and ruin. They destroy lives. They use and manipulate a woman's nobler instincts, her kindness and compassion, her trust.**

**As individuals, these fine specimens of humanity are anything but remarkable. The typical predator is shallow, usually lacking talent at anything not involving using and manipulating people. He is unstable, impatient, driven by immediate need, controlled by self-gratification, incapable of commitment. Very skilled at seducing women, he fails at long-term relationships. He invokes a magic beyond his control, creates unrealized and unrealizable expectations, disappoints, then leaves behind him pain and the bitter taste of regret. His is the reverse Midas Touch, the power to transform gold into garbage.**

**All their temporary "conquests" fail to mitigate their profound loneliness, the pus-seeping wound at their center. They burn out early, these worshipers of perpetual youth and unlimited second chances. By their 30's and 40's, used-up, divorced, groaning under child-support payments, losing their looks, laughed at by younger women, they wonder why they have been cheated, why life has left them behind.**

**Q: Gangrene? Isn't that a bit strong?**

**A: Predators have (at least) two things in common with gangrene. They're a dangerous infection, and they smell of death.**

. . . your wives, your daughters,  
Your matrons and your maids,  
could not fill up  
The cistern of my lust . . .

*Shakespeare, Macbeth*

**Q: What do you think of "NLP", the magic formula touted for seducing women?**

**A: "Neurolinguistic Programming" falls in the category of pseudo-science, and is perilously close to quackery. It is not much more than a catchall phrase for a set of techniques practiced by used-car salesmen. As for the utility of NLP for improving one's social life . . . the question naturally comes to mind as to why a skilled manipulator would waste his time seducing vulnerable women when he could amass wealth, start a religion, become famous, make his mark on history.**

**Just as a leopard cannot change his spots, likewise an introverted shy man cannot overnight be magically transformed into an extrovert, a person who can confidently wield the powers of persuasion. NLP is about as useful to the readers of this book as a bicycle is to a fish.**

**Q: What do you have against bars and singles clubs?**

**A: "Pickup joints" are a *zero-sum* game. This means there are winners and losers, and you, as a shy man, fit very neatly in the "loser" category. If you get the feeling in a singles club that you are out of place, unwanted, looked down upon, laughed at . . . trust your instincts. Turn around and walk out the door.**

**Q: Why are there so few women willing to be patient and nurturing with a shy, nervous, tongue-tied man?**

**A: This is the counterpart of the question women ask, "Why are there so few good men?" In both cases the answer is the same. They are out there, you just have to look in the [right places](#).**

**Q: Does the book reveal the secrets that have worked so well for Don Juans and Casanovas through the ages?**

**A: These so-called secrets of seducers are nothing more than attuning one's self to a woman's feelings, needs and desires: listening and telling her what she want to hear and leaving to her own imagination the rest. A sense of timing and a feel for subtlety help, too.**

**Q: So, it's just a matter then of common sense and an intuitive knowledge of human nature?**

**A: Nothing more.**

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# PERSONAL

by

Carlos Malenkov

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"You're what? Eighteen? *And you've never had a date?*"

Beth knew she was hopeless. Grossly overweight and ugly. Totally inept when it came to dealing with people one-on-one. Maybe she should resign herself to living the rest of her life without companionship. Finally dying as a dried up old maid. Alone. Forever.

Freshman English Comp was one of the few classes she enjoyed. The instructor, Professor Wilmington ("Just call me Prof."), calmly took for granted the adulation of his female students. Young -- in his early thirties -- dynamic, and conventionally handsome. A hell of a good teacher, too. He made the act of writing come alive. His praise for an effectively written story or poem, or even just for a well-turned phrase, brightened Beth's afternoons.

"I'm giving all of you a rather unusual assignment this week. Let us suppose you are seeking a person of the opposite sex -- or even of the same sex if you are so inclined -- for romantic purposes. One method of doing so is through the personal ads in various publications and venues. Well then, write a personal ad. Pour your entire soul into a paragraph or two. Push your imagination and creativity to the limit. Craft the ad as if the rest of your life, or your love life anyhow, depended on it.

"I will, of course, award a top grade for the best-written ads. Additionally, as a special incentive, I have arranged with the editor of the well-known *Voice of the Millennium Monthly* to have the three best ads published in their personal ads section. So, you might get national exposure, and a pipeline to thousands of potential boy or girlfriends at no cost to you. Good luck and good writing."

Awaken the sleeping princess.  
A shy and sweetly virginal  
maid awaits the knight whose  
kiss will set her free from the  
cold, cold dungeon of  
loneliness. . . .

It was corny and old-fashioned, but it expressed her deepest longings.

Prof awarded her an A-, and what mattered more, third place in the competition. She had won the opportunity to present her case before a national audience.

Responses began to trickle in. The trickle became a flood. Beth had a stack of over 200 letters in front of her. All were from men who claimed to be dying to meet her . . . or, more accurately, dying to meet the woman she had represented herself as.

Prof encouraged her to write back to a few of them.

"But I'm nothing like what these men expect me to be. I'm *fat*. And ugly. And afraid."

"Precisely, Beth. You're terrified. That's what lies at the core of your being -- fear. And that's the challenge you have to face up to. As for the rest . . . certainly you are unconventional in appearance. But you'll discover that some men won't mind, and will, in fact, appreciate your special charms. However, if

you don't look, you won't find."

Beth began writing letters. And she found Leo.

Leonidas Zartblum was frighteningly intelligent. His darkly luminous sense of humor and fierce joy in living burned through the dry, sterile words on paper. He was a sensitive soul who felt compassion for human suffering, and understood and respected Beth's loneliness. This was all the more remarkable in light of his physical handicaps. He stood all of 4'-8" tall and had a twisted spine.

My Dear Beth,

It grieves me that the other men you have thus far met through your personal ad have proven disappointing. Certainly a woman of your quality deserves a worthy companion. Continue to search and you will find him. Were it not for my malformed body, I myself would be honored to find favor in your eyes, and perhaps even . . . seek your favors. Meanwhile, if you're amenable to the notion, we'll remain friends.

L.

"Disappointing" was something of an understatement. The men were complete jerks. Most lost interest immediately when they found out her looks didn't measure up to pop culture standards. The rest didn't care what she looked like, but then they didn't care about much of anything else except getting her into bed.

"Leo, what *am* I to do with myself? Here I stand, a newly-minted adult, eager to go out and make my way in the world, to experience what it has to offer, sensual pleasures and all. But, it seems that one of life's main avenues is permanently closed off to me. I'm fat! I'm ugly! I'm condemned to remain the perpetual virgin. Doomed!"

"Feeling sorry for yourself, Beth? Look at me. *Look at me.* Birth defects doomed me not only to be a perpetual virgin, but a perpetual outsider. I'm a mascot, a circus freak, someone not to be taken seriously.

"Poor, poor fat Beth. A couple of centuries back you might have been considered voluptuous. Fashionably plump. Poor, ugly Beth. You have a face more interesting by far than most of the vapid Barbie doll clones walking the streets. Spare me your self-pity. It ill becomes you."

"Whatever other physical problems you might have, Leo, there's nothing at all wrong with your tongue. I see you spending your evenings stropping its cutting edge."

"We're two of a kind, you delicious dumpling of a maiden. My soul just happens to be too large for the body it inhabits, and yours is too refined. Let us then console each other with the delights of witty intercourse, since the other kind seems denied us."

"Witty? What knowest thou of such matters, churl? Varlet! Ah, well, half a wit is better than none."

Beth dreamed of Leo that night. He was a powerful mage imprisoned by a witch's curse within the body of a misshapen dwarf. Only the kiss of his true beloved could release him from the enchantment . . . but he fled her embrace. "Tempted as I am by your charms, dumpling, I shall remain within my protective

armor of deformity." There was a wistful smile on his face and a tear in his eye. Beth awoke, and she was wet between her legs.

"Leo." She hesitated. "How would you like to take me out to dinner?"

Even over the phone his voice betrayed amusement.

"My dear Beth. As much as I'd enjoy squiring you around, it would nevertheless create, shall we say, certain social difficulties. I'm quite accustomed to people giving me a hard time, but I couldn't in good conscience let you suffer on my account."

"You're so easy, Leo. I'll pick you up in my car at 7:00 tonight in front of your apartment building."

The eggplant lasagna was delicious, but the ambience left a bad taste in her mouth. The whispering around them had become quite audible.

"What is this, a freak show?"

"he fat lady and the dwarf. Now, where's the sword swallower?"

Leo tapped a knife on the side of his champagne glass, then climbed up onto his chair.

"I would like to express my appreciation to all you good people for the entertainment you are inadvertently providing. When I brought my sweetheart here, little did I know that we were intruding on the annual convention of simpletons, scoundrels, reprobates, social outcasts, moral lepers, diseased souls, and all-around losers. I beg your indulgence if we do not fit in and have offended you by our presence here. Thank you for your patience and understanding. You may now resume spinning malicious rumors and fomenting poisonous gossip."

There was dead silence, and a few persons got up to leave. Beth and Leo enjoyed the remainder of their meal undisturbed, and the headwaiter came over to apologize.

"You handled that quite nicely, Leo. I had no idea you were an orator."

"You mean a demagogue, my sweet."

"Beth, this isn't the way back to my apartment."

"That sounds like a line from a grade B melodrama. Surely you can do better than that, Leo."

"Milady, I do believe I am in the process of being kidnapped for your, ah, harem."

"You have . . . unmasked my insidious plot, Chief Inspector Leo. Curses, foiled again."

The remains of the coffee and home-made fudge lay on the dining room table. The two of them sat in silence, staring into each other's eyes.

"And now?" Leo asked.



"What's to become of us?" she asked in turn.

"We're lost. Lost souls. Could I possibly interest you in a discount membership in the Legion of the Lost? For you, a special deal."

"For *both* of us, Leo." Beth reached out and took his hand.

"You're beautiful, you know."

"I was about to say the same thing."

They had just finished undressing each other. He smiled, limped over to her, and kissed her nipples -- left, then right. His hand gently caressed an ample buttock. "Mm, I just love cantaloupes."

"And I love celery." She was holding his erection in her fist.

He was still inside her as they fell asleep cuddling each other.

"So, Beth, what have you learned from the personal ad experience?"

"Prof, I've learned perhaps more than you intended. I discovered a new way of looking at myself, and found I don't have to compromise my standards for the sake of companionship."

"You met someone, then?"

"Yes, a noble soul. A shining hero in an age of cowardice and mediocrity. And, to boot, by far the handsomest and sexiest man I've ever seen."

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Dear Reader,

I would like to express my appreciation to you for registering your copy of *HOW-2 Meet Women*. Your support helps make it possible for me to keep writing.

Sending the author a contribution demonstrates a very special commitment to changing your life and making possible an outreach to other people. Your determination will take you far. . .

I give you my blessing in your quest to find a mate worthy of you and in the even more important quest to find self-fulfillment.



Author:

HOW-2 Meet Women  
Advanced Bash Scripting Guide  
Short fiction  
various software packages for DOS and Linux

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# Credits

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We work in the dark
We do what we can
We give what we have
Our doubt is our passion,
and our passion is our task
The rest is the madness of art.
```

Henry James

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